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SCEPTICS, MILLENARIANS AND JEWS

EDITED BY

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To
Richard H. Popkin

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INTRODUCTION

All of the contributors to this volume of essays share at least one characteristic in common, apart from their mutual interest in sceptics, millenarians, and Jews: we are all friends of Richard H. Popkin, who celebrates his sixty-fifth birthday today. Dick Popkin is a well-known man, whose fame extends far beyond the circle of his friends. He is well-known to generations of students of philosophy for his classic work, *The History of Scepticism*, which now spans the period between Erasmus and Spinoza. He is well-known to scholars for having put Isaac La Peyrère on the philosophical map and for having shown how the apparent dead ends of thought in reality lead on to the broad avenues of intellectual endeavor and history. And he is well-known to millions of Americans (even if his name is not always remembered) for having been the first to suggest and argue in print, as early as 1966, that Lee Harvey Oswald could not have acted alone in assassinating President Kennedy. Dick's views, published in book form as *The Second Oswald*, were endorsed in substance when the Congress of the United States overturned the findings of the Warren Commission in 1977.

The common thread through all of Dick Popkin's work is that he is first and foremost an historical detective, searching out and even more spectacularly, finding, startlingly new pieces of evidence and interpreting them with extraordinary imagination. Amsterdam, London, Stockholm, Wolfenbüttel, Zürich, Jerusalem, and even Kentucky all form part of Dick Popkin's archival territory. Documents which have already been available to scholars take on new and more significant meanings under his touch: his rediscovery of Spinoza's connections with English Quakers is a recent example of this phenomenon, for only Dick was able to see how revolutionary these sources were to our understanding of the great philosopher's work.

When the editors of this volume sat down to outline its contents and to discuss contributors, one thing was clear: we did not want a conventional *Festschrift*. Most such collections should really be called *Short-schripts*, containing as they do a rag-bag of hastily cobbled-together essays on a wide variety of subjects. The contributors had, after all, learned so much from Dick Popkin, and indeed, many of us had embarked on entire research projects on the basis of our discussions with him and after having been shown his findings. We therefore chose to produce a book of essays centered around three of the most important themes in Dick's work: sceptics, millenarians, and Jews. As our footnotes make clear, everyone

of us in this volume has been directly influenced by our friendship with him. For Dick Popkin is a very rare breed of scholar: an innovative researcher who is eager to share the fruit of his hard work with others, dispatching photocopies and manuscript references around the globe, without a passing thought that a more indolent scholar might poach in his preserve. And virtue is its own reward: when highly literate thieves broke into Dick's car in Paris in 1985 and stole (among other things) the accumulated research notes of two years, he was able to reconstruct the lost material almost entirely with a little help from his friends. This is what the Republic of Letters is all about.

We are a mixed group: two of Dick's friends from early days in St. Louis and California, a brace of philosophers, scholars from Holland and France who took part in his marvellous conference on Menasseh ben Israel in 1985, colleagues from Israel who met Dick when he was beginning to work on the Newton theological papers there, and finally, his most recent doctoral student and his son. One of Dick's admirers referred to him in print as "the tireless Popkin". Be that as it may, we shall never see "the retired Popkin", for this is a man interested in his work.

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27 December 1988

SCEPTICISM AND THE PROBLEM OF THE CRITERION

AVRUM STROLL

I

Richard Popkin has taught us some valuable lessons about the history of modern philosophy, and especially about the important role that scepticism plays in that history. His work demonstrates that what many historians regarded as an eccentric aberration in the steady movement toward a better understanding of the nature of knowledge is instead central to that process, and one of its main driving forces. As his analysis brings out, scepticism operates by accepting certain basic assumptions or principles of its dogmatic opponents rather than rejecting them from the outset, and then proceeds to show that they have sceptical implications. Scepticism is thus one outcome that a deeper exploration of such principles may produce. It is no accident, then, as seen from Popkin's perspective, that in the central domains of philosophy wherever knowledge claims have been seriously advanced, sceptical challenge has marched in tandem with dogmatic assertion. This is true in moral theory, philosophy of religion, philosophy of mind, in epistemology, of course, and now even in the philosophy of language – witness the sceptical implications Kripke has drawn from Wittgenstein's account of what it is to follow a rule. Popkin's further point is that the needle-like thrusts of the sceptic have not only had a deflationary effect, but have also exercised a positive influence as well, forcing theorists to reformulate and to rework their conceptions of knowledge in order to make them resistant to such challenges. In this way, the sceptic has given impetus to the forward movement of philosophy since the Renaissance.

Because of its symbiotic function, scepticism has historically taken a variety of different forms, most of them engendered in response to new developments in science and in the theory of knowledge. It is, accordingly, subject to multifarious classificatory schemes that reflect various conceptual contrasts and distinctions. One of the oldest, most familiar and still one of the most useful of these taxonomies, distinguishes radical from moderate forms of scepticism – for example, Pyrrhonic from methodological scepticism. And, of course, within these divisions finer distinctions can be drawn, between Pyrrhonic and Academic scepticism say, as Popkin's account makes clear.

Without trying to explore this rich and complex distinction in any

depth, we can say that what unites both categories, that is, what allows historians to subsume them under the general rubric, "scepticism", is their common attitude that knowledge is unattainable. In contrast, what divides them is a disagreement about whether *any* reliable information about the world is possible. Radical sceptics maintain that nothing can be known (a view that does not necessarily involve an assertion to that effect) and accordingly that any supposed advance toward knowledge is illusory. Moderate sceptics are of the opposite opinion, holding that some beliefs have more evidential warrant than others, though none of them can be established with absolute certainty. Sometimes both attitudes are to be found in the same philosopher. Hume is a good example. In the *Treatise*, the radical scepticism found in the chapter "Of scepticism with regard to the senses", drives him to the position that we have no demonstrative or probable grounds for believing in the existence of the external world. In that work he also develops a parallel, radically sceptical argument with respect to the Principle of Induction. Yet elsewhere in the *Treatise*, e.g., in discussing probability, he asserts that some inferences about the external world, and some about the future, are more probable than others. In these latter cases his scepticism is of a mitigated sort.

It is also important to stress that both forms of scepticism presuppose the same conception of knowledge, a conception, as I have indicated, that is also espoused by their dogmatic opponents. This conception tends to identify knowledge with certainty. It thus rules out any claim to the effect that a high degree of probability could be a case of knowledge. The conception states that if A knows that p, p is true and it is *impossible* for A to be mistaken. I have underlined the word "impossible" because it is fundamental to the conception, tying it as it does to the notion of certitude. As the sceptic, whether radical or moderate, sees the matter, it is not necessary to show in any given case that A, who is making a knowledge claim, is *in fact* mistaken. All that needs to be shown is that *it is possible* for A to be mistaken; for if that is possible, it follows that A does not know that p, given the characterization that identifies knowledge with certitude.

The sceptical move is thus a general one. As we shall see, this is why the sceptic attacks whole categories of evidence – sense experience and reason. The power of his attack does not depend on his showing that someone is wrong in a particular case. Rather, his strategy is to argue that the *kinds* of criteria or grounds that any A will adduce for a knowledge claim are not conclusive or air-tight; that there is a gap that allows for the possibility of error between the invocation of such criteria and a particular claim based upon them. The strategy has parallels in formal logic where, in showing that an argument is invalid, it is not

necessary to show that its premises are in fact false, but only that it is possible for them to be true and yet that the conclusion might be false. In the same way, it is sufficient for the sceptic to show that if the grounds for A's assertion are not conclusive, then A's affirmation, which rests on those grounds, *could be* mistaken, and that is sufficient to show that A does not really know that p. This is indeed a very powerful argument, for it allows the sceptic to conclude that if the grounds upon which A's claim rests are not conclusive, then even if p is true A does not know that p.

This strategy has two important implications for the historian's understanding of modern philosophy. First, as Popkin makes plain, the sceptic is not contending that the concept of knowledge per se is unintelligible or senseless; quite the contrary. Instead, the sceptic insists, in concurrence with his dogmatic adversary, that what they are both referring to is indeed the only correct conception of knowledge. What he is challenging his opponent to show is that there exist any instances of this concept. Second, the fact that both the dogmatist and the sceptic have an identical conception of knowledge is, from an historical perspective, highly significant. What it means for the historian is that the dispute between the two is a genuine one. Their disagreement is not to be described as a case where, because they are working with different conceptions of knowledge, they are advancing views that do not really contradict or oppose one another. That is not, nor has it been since the seventeenth century, the historical situation. By accepting the same conception they have advanced beyond definitional difference to genuine disagreement about whether there exist cases of knowledge.

The fact that this is so brings me to the main point of this essay, i.e., to an examination of the sceptic's claim that the criteria that the dogmatist is using are defective, i.e., to an examination of what is sometimes called "the problem of the criterion". The problem of the criterion begins, as I have emphasized, with the sceptic's accepting certain of his dogmatic opponent's basic premises and then exploring and extending these to show that they have sceptical implications. This is exactly what Kripke does, for example, with Wittgenstein's description of what it is to follow a rule. Kripke accepts that description and then shows that there is no way, using the criteria Wittgenstein gives, of knowing what would count as a correct way of following the rule. The outcome is a classical sceptical result. (I am using the term "dogmatist" throughout in a non-pejorative way to refer to anyone who claims to know, with certainty, at least one proposition to be true, and where "know" is used in the sense of "certitude" previously mentioned.)

More exactly, the problem of the criterion is an argumentative strategy whose general structure is as follows:

1. A asserts a knowledge claim, *p*. Let this be the assertion, "Smith is now in his office".

2. The sceptic asks A, "How do you know that *p* is true?" (i.e., that Smith is now in his office).

3. A responds by saying: "I am now looking at Smith. I can see him clearly through the glass, so I know that he is in his office".

4. The sceptic then argues that "looking at *x*" or "seeing *x*" is not a conclusive ground for A's claim to know that *p*. The sceptic supports this contention by pointing out that someone could assert that he is looking at, or seeing *x*, but might be mistaken. (The Dream Hypothesis would be a powerful illustration in support of his contention.)

5. Given the conception of knowledge they both espouse, it follows that A does not know that *p*.

It is important to stress that the sceptic is not asserting at any stage in the preceding argument that A is mistaken. The sceptic does not wish to put himself in the position of making such a positive assertion. That would itself be a dogmatic claim and it would lay him open to the counter-question: "What evidence do you have for asserting that?" Instead, the sceptic is challenging the validity of the criterion that A is using. This is a serious challenge because, as I have indicated, both the sceptic and the dogmatist have agreed that "A knows that *p*" is true only if A *cannot* be mistaken. But if the criterion to which A is appealing allows for error, it is possible (as the Dream Argument shows) that A could be mistaken in claiming that Smith is in his office. That is all the sceptic has to show in order to make his case.

The preceding line of reasoning can be, and of course historically was, generalized to cover all of the senses. Hearing, tasting, touching and smelling, as well as seeing, are not infallible supports for knowledge claims. The inference to be drawn is that sense-experience *in general* cannot provide a secure foundation for knowledge. From an attack upon the senses to an attack upon reason is just a short step; the argument can be used to show that reason suffers from the same liabilities. Since sense-experience and reason are the only plausible candidates as supports for knowledge claims, it follows that no one has solid grounds for such claims and accordingly that no A is ever justified in claiming to know that *p*. According to Popkin this is just the point Montaigne is making in his *Apologie*.

There is no doubt that Popkin has identified a central, powerful line of argumentation in scepticism, one that both radical and mitigated sceptics historically have employed. There is also no doubt that since the seventeenth century philosophers of a non-sceptical persuasion have been trying to confute this line of argumentation. On balance the scholarly opinion has been that such rebuttals have not been successful.

In this paper I wish to produce an argument against the sceptic which, so far as I know, or at least in the form in which I will present it here, is entirely new. But before doing so, I would like briefly to consider perhaps the strongest argument against scepticism that has been advanced in the twentieth century. This argument is to be found (though in a less explicit form than I will present it here) in three famous papers by G.E. Moore: "A Defense of Common Sense", "Proof of an External World", and "Certainty". Moore has identified a flaw in the sceptic's critical argument, and his approach is directed toward showing exactly where this lies. His reasoning is both clever and persuasive, but I think it ultimately fails because it, in turn, rests upon assumptions that the sceptic need not and will not accept. My argument in contrast has the advantage that it only invokes principles that both the sceptic and the dogmatist mutually endorse. It then shows that given such suppositions, the critical argument can be defeated. Still, let us see why Moore's argument must be taken seriously.

II

In his later papers, such as those mentioned above, Moore in effect diagnoses the sceptic's mistake as stemming from his accepting the principle that one is never justified in making a knowledge claim unless one has and can give reasons in support of such a claim. (I say "in effect" because Moore does not explicitly identify this assumption; but that he has it in mind is clearly presupposed by what he does explicitly say.) Like the sceptic, Moore considers the issue of *justification* to be of central concern. When A asserts, "Smith is now in his office", and is asked by someone, "How do you know that he is?", then, as the sceptic sees the matter, A faces a dilemma. If A gives a reason for his claim, he subjects himself to the criterion problem. But if he cannot give any reason whatever, then others are justified in doubting that he knows what he claims to know. His claim to *know* would be given short shrift by others. He would be assumed to be guessing, surmising, conjecturing or hypothesizing that Smith is in his office, but not to know that he is. So A is genuinely draped upon the horns of a dilemma. Either horn leaves him in the position of not being able to justify his assertion that he knows that p.

Now Moore's response to this situation was, in effect, to challenge the claim that the second horn of the dilemma produced the difficulty adduced. He did this – as I read him – by in effect challenging the assumption upon which that difficulty rests, namely, that one is *never* justified in asserting one knows that p unless one has and can give the reasons in support of that claim. He states on the contrary that he

(Moore) is in the position of knowing with respect to many propositions (e.g., that the earth is very old, that this is a hand) that he does know that they are true, and knows them to be true with absolutely certainty. But he insists that he does not know how he knows them to be true, or in any case, that he is less sure how he knows them to be true than that he does. Generalizing from Moore's own discussion, one can infer that he is asserting that there may be – indeed there are – occasions when one knows something without knowing how one knows, and therefore without being able to give the supporting reasons for one's claim. If Moore is right, the conclusion to be drawn from this state of affairs is that the sceptic's insistent demand for such reasons is not *always* in order. Moore seems to be making a logical point here and the point is well taken. It is clearly not self-contradictory to assert that A knows that p without A's being able to give any reasons in support of p. A person thus may be justified in saying he knows that p in those particular circumstances. Note here that Moore also seems to be presupposing that in special circumstances A's knowing that p provides A with all the justification he needs for asserting that p.

It thus seems that Moore has found a defect in the sceptic's argumentative strategy. He has shown that the flow of reasoning that generates the criterion problem can be interrupted by denying the propriety of the sceptic's question: "How do you know that p?" Moore would reply by saying: "I don't know how I know that p, but I do know that I do, and with absolute certainty". Because Moore offers no criterion – such as seeing, hearing or touching for his assertion that he knows the earth is very old – the sceptic cannot initiate the kind of challenge to the soundness of the criteria that the tradition has found so compelling.

Moore's move is clever – it immediately changes the momentum of the discussion by putting the onus on the sceptic. The sceptic has been maneuvered into an awkward position. Either he must concede Moore's point that Moore does know that p without knowing how he knows it, or the sceptic must put himself in the position of being a *de facto* dogmatist, i.e., of asserting that Moore does not really know what he claims to know. But the second of these options is wholly inconsistent with his best strategy which is neither to assert nor to deny anything, but merely to draw out the sceptical implications of his opponent's assertions and suppositions. This is exactly what Moore's tactics prevent him from doing.

Let us depart from Moorean exegesis to look at the logical situation itself. Moore is clearly right in holding that there may be occasions – though no doubt they are comparatively rare – when a person may be in the position of knowing something without knowing how he knows,

and accordingly may not be in a position to give the reasons in support of his claim. If so, the fact that he knows seems sufficient justification for his saying that he does. Moore in fact never developed his position in greater detail by giving examples or illustrations. But it is easy to construct examples supporting his thesis. Here are two.

Suppose A has come into possession of a certain piece of information, *q*, in such a way that A knows that *q* with certainty. But A may by now have forgotten how he came to acquire that piece of information and if so cannot provide the reasons in support of *q*. Yet he not only claims to know that *q*, but by hypothesis, he does. He is therefore justified in saying that he does.

The second example spells out Moore's suggestion in more detail and adds something important to it. Suppose A has absolute pitch. Then A can identify with complete accuracy any musical note. If asked, A states that a certain note is B flat. But now if one were to ask how he knows that the note is B flat, or for the reasons in support of his judgment, A might well answer: "I don't know how I know – I just do. It's a gift I have. I can't give you any reason. Whenever a note is played, I can invariably identify it. That's all I can say".

These examples support Moore's thesis. But, as I have said, the second example adds something else, even more helpful to his position. For it is clear that in the case of one who has perfect pitch, there are independent ways of confirming that that person knows which notes are being played. If, under appropriate test conditions, the individual is always successful in identifying various sounds, an independent observer would eventually have to conclude that the person does have absolute pitch and therefore knows with certainty which notes are being sounded.

It thus seems from these examples that Moore is right and the sceptic is wrong. There are circumstances in which A can know that *p* without knowing how he knows, and therefore without being able to produce supporting reasons for what he knows. Since the sceptic's argument seems to depend on the assumption that one who does not have and/or cannot provide supporting reasons for his claim to know that *p* is not justified in claiming to know that *p*, and since these counter-examples show the principle to be false, it would seem that Moore has refuted the sceptic.

Why, then, do I say that Moore's solution will not do? In order to explain why, let us briefly review the status of the argument as it now exists. Moore argues that there are occasions when A can truthfully and therefore justifiably claim to know that *p* without being able to give supporting reasons for this claim. As we have seen, the normal (not necessarily even a specifically sceptical) response to this assertion would be: "Just because you claim to know that *p*, it does not follow that you do. If you

cannot give reasons in support of your contention then – just as the language indicates – there is literally no reason for anyone to believe that you do know. Otherwise, you are simply in the position of asserting, perhaps vigorously and aggressively, that you yourself, you personally, know; but none of that shows that you really do. So apart from what you say, how does one determine that you do know?”

In effect this normal response demands that *at least* if A cannot give his reasons for claiming to know that p – just as the person with absolute pitch could not – that there be objective and independent ways of determining whether his assertions are true or not. The second example I suggested above, developed in the spirit of Moore’s discussion, is designed to meet this sort of objection. We have seen that because A, under suitable test conditions, can invariably identify the differing notes he hears one can eventually be sure that A has absolute pitch. This shows that, as Moore asserts, a person may know that p without knowing how he knows. It also seems to support Moore’s unexpressed supposition that if someone does know that p, then that person is justified in such circumstances in asserting that he does.

But it is at this point that Moore’s defense runs into difficulties over the matter of justification. The sceptic will counter his approach by pointing out that Moore’s examples are misleadingly selective and are not typical of the sorts of situations most persons find themselves in when they make and then justify knowledge claims. As we have seen, a more standard situation can be found in A’s claim that Smith is now in his office, a claim that is buttressed by A’s remark that he can plainly see Smith through the glass. This claim is typical in that it is justified by an appeal to sense-experience; this, according to the sceptic, is what most persons do when ordinarily challenged to prove that they know that p.

But with respect to these latter sorts of cases Moore is indeed in trouble. For now the sceptic will ask: “How, with respect to these sorts of cases, do we set up independent tests, similar to those in the case of the person with perfect pitch, to confirm that, say, Smith is now in his office? What would it be like to test one’s claim *to see* Smith through the glass without presupposing the validity of the very criterion – seeing – that is under consideration?” In the case of the person with perfect pitch, the sceptic will go on to point out, the independent tests presupposed the validity of sense-experience, namely, that A was in fact hearing external sounds and that those who tested his responses were hearing the same external sounds. But for those tests to be valid, it must be assumed that there is an external world and that one has access to it via hearing. But that kind of justification is precisely what the Dream Hypothesis challenges. In short, that sense-experience provides grounds for justifica-

tion cannot be assumed to be correct, but indeed is the point at issue. This is just what the sceptic has challenged from the outset. So unless Moore were to assume that such external tests were available, A's attempt to justify his claim that Smith is now in his office, on the basis of what he sees, cannot be taken seriously. So in the end there can be no independent verification, based upon sense-experience, that is not question-begging. Moore's objection to the second horn of the sceptic's dilemma is thus ineffectual. Since there is no independent possibility for an external justification of A's claim – and this is the typical situation – then A would be reduced, as Moore was, to asserting without supporting reasons that he knows that p. But such assertions do not amount to a solution to the justification problem. They by-pass it. This is precisely Wittgenstein's criticism of Moore. He writes:

Moore says he *knows* that the earth existed long before his birth. And put like that it seems to be a personal statement about him, even if it is in addition a statement about the world. Now it is philosophically uninteresting whether Moore knows this or that, but it is interesting that, and how, it can be known. (*On Certainty*, 84).

As Wittgenstein implies, Moore is not giving a justification for what he says he knows. Moore's *saying* that he knows is not a justification. A justification would consist in informing us "that and how" p can be known. And this is a matter of providing the reasons in support of p. This is the only way of playing the public language game. Moore's argument against the sceptic thus fails because in the end he can neither provide a justification for his claim to know, or even describe the necessary independent tests in a non-circular fashion that would establish that what he says is true.

III

In reflecting upon Moore's approach, we can see that it fails in two ways. First, it assumes that if someone knows that p, such knowledge is a sufficient justification for that person's claiming to know. As Wittgenstein indicates, this is not so; that justification is a public performance, requiring the advancement of reasons for a claim. Second, the kind of example that seemed to help Moore's case, that of the person with perfect pitch, in the end does not, because it presupposes precisely what is in question, the validity of sense-experience. So Moore does not escape the second horn of the dilemma after all and in effect is reduced simply to affirming that he, Moore, knows that p. Moore's argument thus collapses because it invokes principles which the sceptic need not and will not accept. For any

argument to meet the sceptical challenge it will have to employ only those principles the sceptic will endorse. I will now propose such an argument.

Let us begin by focussing on some considerations that lend further credence to the sceptic's contention that seeing is not a conclusive criterion. Let us approach the matter from a partly historical perspective in the spirit of Popkin.

From the seventeenth century at least, the sceptic, for reasons I have previously mentioned, has tended to lump all the senses together. From his standpoint, they all suffer from the same liabilities, so there is no special reason to distinguish between them in terms of their corroborative powers. But, in fact, even from his perspective there is. There are important differences between tasting and seeing, between touching and seeing, etc., and I would like to bring out one of those important differences now.

The philosophical tradition even well into our own century has taken it to be a fact that "perception" as it is called refers to two different levels of apprehension of the world. The first is that the five senses can all be thought of as modes of perception. So when we hear sounds, smell odors, and touch things each of these is like seeing: they all belong to the same level, as it were, in making us aware of some feature of the world. Now even if one agrees that this is so, there is still something special about seeing that differentiates it from the other senses. Let us call it the "richness" of the concept of seeing. It is noticing this feature of richness that takes us to the second level of what the tradition calls "perception". At this level, seeing has been judged by the tradition to be especially important and to require a special emphasis. Though some of the classical writers, Berkeley for instance, makes reference to touching and hearing, their concentration – and this is true of the literature into our own time – has been on seeing. What they have noticed about seeing is that it may take many forms; in this sense, it is much richer than the other sense modalities. We can distinguish looking at, staring at, gazing at, observing, noticing, scrutinizing and so forth. The other senses are much less opulent in these respects, and smelling is a good example. There are clearly fewer ways or modes of smelling than there are of seeing – perhaps sniffing would be one such, but it is hard to think of many others. Similar comments apply to hearing. Even touching lacks the scope and diversity of seeing: stroking might be considered one of its varieties. In general, we tend to enrich such concepts as hearing and tasting by adverbial constructions: he listened carefully, intently, etc. But with seeing, we have special verbs for many of these and related operations, such as scrutinizing, observing and noticing.

Now why should the richness of the concept of seeing work to the advantage of the sceptic? The answer is that these various complex modes of seeing can be further subdivided into two general categories. Some are, in a strict logical sense, sub-cases of seeing. Thus to notice, observe, or scrutinize *x* is to see *x*. The relationship is one of entailment. But some are not sub-cases at all in that strict sense. So that it is possible to look at *x*, stare at *x*, gaze at *x* without seeing *x*. There is nothing wrong with the statement, "My glasses were there on the table all along; I looked at them several times and never saw them". But it would be semantically deviant to say, "I noticed my glasses but didn't see them". Some of the modes of the other senses exhibit these same features. It is possible to listen, even listen carefully, and yet not hear anything; and it is possible to sniff, even sniff vigorously, and yet not smell anything – even if in these cases there are in fact sounds to be heard and odors to be smelled.

Now from the sceptic's point of view these distinctions within the second level of perception provide important support for his criterial argument. According to the tradition, all of these modes are ways of *perceiving* the world, since to say that one is looking at *x*, or noticing *x* is to say that one is perceiving *x*. But the clever sceptic can now point out that if a distinction is drawn between genuine sub-cases and the other modes of perception, then there is additional ammunition for his view that the senses are not infallible. For it is possible to look at *x*, stare at *x*, gaze at *x*, and not to see *x*. So that when A said, as we saw earlier, that he knew that Smith was in his office because he looked at Smith, and *could plainly see him through the glass*, the sceptic can point out that A's looking at *x* is no guarantee that A was seeing *x*. It is a non-sequitur, as the previous considerations establish, to think that looking at *x* entails seeing *x*. So that we can have cases of perception, as the tradition uses the term, where one can be said to be perceiving *x* without seeing *x*. We thus have a further supporting argument here for the corrigibility of sense perception.

IV

But what, then, is wrong with the sceptic's reasoning that leads to the criterion problem?

As the previous discussion makes clear, the sceptic, carefully noting the way ordinary language is used, will distinguish between cases of looking at, staring at, gazing at, and cases of scrutinizing, observing and noticing. It is only these latter modes that entail seeing. Thus, it is possible for A to look at *x*, but not to see *x*. This shows that there is the kind of evidential gap between looking at something and seeing something which

the sceptic claims always exists between any form of sense-experience and the claims based upon such experience.

As I said at the outset, the sceptic did not originally challenge A's contention that he was now seeing Smith through the office glass. What he challenged was that seeing is a conclusive ground for the claim that Smith is now in his office. Now in the light of the foregoing discussion this is an important point, for it suggests that the sceptic is not denying that on that occasion A is doing what A, and indeed what everyone else, including the sceptic, would call "seeing". A has claimed two things: 1) to be looking at Smith, and 2) therefore, to be seeing Smith. What the sceptic is at least in part denying is that 1) is a conclusive basis for 2). But suppose that A insists that he not only looked at Smith *but saw Smith on that occasion*. If the sceptic were to challenge that claim the issue between him and Smith would turn into the sort of factual controversy that the sceptic's whole strategy was designed to avoid. From the historian's perspective the point is also important because it means that the sceptic's argument represents a genuine challenge to the dogmatist; for the sceptic has accepted the dogmatist's conception of seeing. If their disagreement turned on the issue of what it is to see – in effect, about the meaning of the concept of seeing – there would be no real dispute between them: they would be talking at cross purposes. However, that is not the case, so it follows that the situation is exactly parallel to that in which they were seen to concur about the meaning of the concept of knowledge. In short, when the sceptic challenges the dogmatist to show that seeing is an infallible criterion, he is using the term "seeing" in just the way his opponent does.

If this analysis is correct, the sceptic is in serious difficulty and is subject to the counter-argument I mentioned earlier. The difficulty can be posed as follows: When A looked at Smith did he see Smith as he claims, or did it only seem to him that he did? Either alternative raises difficulties for the sceptic. If the sceptic now invokes the Dream Hypothesis, it is possible that A did not really see Smith; he might have been dreaming or hallucinating; and to have "seen" Smith in a dream is not to have seen Smith; it is to have dreamed that one saw Smith. But either A did see Smith or he didn't. The sceptic will have to choose one of these options – but which?

If the sceptic holds that from the proposition "Because A might have been dreaming" it follows that "A did not see Smith", he commits a non-sequitur. The second proposition does not follow from the first. From the mere possibility that A might have been dreaming, it does not follow that on that occasion A was not in fact seeing Smith. But the sceptic cannot take the further step of saying that in fact A was not seeing

Smith; for as I said earlier, the sceptic does not wish to make the stronger claim that in fact A was dreaming and therefore in fact did not on that occasion see Smith.

So it would seem that the sceptic must fall back on what appears to have been his optimal strategy all along. He will then agree that A did see Smith all right, but he will point out that seeing, like the other sense modalities, is not a conclusive criterion for the truth of A's statement that Smith is now in his office. This is to revive the problem of the criterion which after all was his purpose from the beginning.

But if this is the sceptic's optimal strategy, he becomes subject to my counter-argument, an argument that I believe undermines his whole position.

I have emphasized that for the sceptic's argument to be effective against the dogmatist, the two of them must be using certain key terms in exactly the same sense. That surely must be the case when the sceptic asserts that seeing is not an infallible ground for A's assertion. The problem of the criterion can only be generated if the sceptic means the same thing by "seeing" that the dogmatist does. In effect, then, the sceptic is committed to working with the ordinary use of "seeing" – the same use as A employed when he said he saw Smith through the office glass.

But that ordinary use entails that if A saw Smith through the office glass, Smith was there to be seen. This is just the difference between "looking at x" and "seeing x". One may look at x and not see x even if x is there; but if one sees x, then one has indeed apprehended x. There is thus an important sense in which, in such a case, one can't be mistaken.

The situation is exactly parallel to that which obtains with respect to knowing. As we have seen, if A knows that p, then p is not only true but A cannot be mistaken in his claim. If it turns out that A is mistaken, then the familiar objection applies, namely that A did not really know. But likewise with seeing. If A saw what A claims to have seen on that occasion, A cannot be mistaken. If A is mistaken, one would have to withdraw the claim that A really saw. But, as I have indicated, the sceptic is committed to the claim that A did see x. If the sceptic wishes to argue that A did not see what he claims to have seen, then that argument would have to be a different argument from that which attacks the validity of the criteria A is using.

What I infer from these considerations is that seeing is a conclusive criterion for establishing the truth of certain judgments. The sceptic's own argument commits him to his inference. There is thus nothing wrong with seeing as a criterion after all. It is not only as good a criterion as we normally need, but in principle no criterion *could be* better.

In that respect, it is just like knowing. We can, therefore, dismiss the sceptic's challenge on the ground that it rests upon a misunderstanding of the logic of seeing.

One can generalize this result to the rest of the sense modalities. For if A touches a dog, a dog is there to be touched. If no dog is there, A could not have touched a dog. (This analysis also applies to cases of visual hallucinations and illusions. If, for example, no dagger was there, Macbeth could not have seen a dagger.) Similar comments apply to smelling, hearing, and tasting. Some modifications no doubt would have to be made in the details of the relationships between A and x, and the claims made by A in such cases, but in principle the results should correspond to those we have achieved in the case of seeing. But to develop these details is a story we cannot further pursue here. In sum, then, I submit that there is no compelling reason to believe the sceptical claim about the fallibility of the senses.

GIBBON AND THE IDOL FO: CHINESE AND CHRISTIAN HISTORY IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT

J.G.A. POCOCK

In the sixty-fourth chapter of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon is led to discuss the decline and fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in fourteenth-century China. A casual reader – if there can be a casual reader of the *Decline and Fall* – may wonder what connection existed between the two; but if he had not been casual, he would have discovered part of the answer in chapter 48, when Gibbon explains the plan of the last two volumes, which cover the period from the reign of Heraclius to the Turkish capture of Constantinople in 1453. Since Byzantine history, he says, is sterile and unchanging, he proposes making it the passive center of these concluding volumes, while studying in turn the history of the far more vital and dynamic peoples – Arabs, Latins, and Turks – who impinged upon and finally overthrew it. The mid-fourteenth century found him at a turning-point in Turkish history, between the early formation of the Ottoman power and its interruption by Timur; and to all these events the rise and disruption of the Mongol chain of khanates was a necessary background. But if this is the structural explanation – I will risk the word “structural” – of the place the Yuan dynasty occupies in Gibbon’s work, there is a thematic explanation which takes us closer to the subjects I wish to discuss. In the last chapter of all, as is well known, Gibbon declares that he has “described the triumph of barbarism and of religion”¹, and there is far more in this remark than a superficial impiety. The nature of barbarism – of peoples coming from outside the major sedentary civilizations capable of overthrowing and destroying them – preoccupied him throughout his study of ancient and modern history, and he wanted to know who these peoples had been and what had rendered them powerful. The history of the Eurasian steppe seemed to be crucial in finding the answer; it was known that the westward movement of the Huns had displaced the Goths and forced them across the Danube, and as we shall see, it was becoming possible to find the origins of the Huns and see what had set them moving. A simple and uniform

¹ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J.B. Bury (London, 1900), vii. 308. All subsequent references to the *Decline and Fall* (henceforth *DF*) are to this edition.

model of nomad society and its history – Gibbon insists that all nomad cultures are essentially alike and indeed indistinguishable² – enabled him and other eighteenth-century scholars to trace a series of movements of the same kind, with steppe peoples invading both Rome and China by direct assault while infiltrating Persia and Egypt in the form of the mercenary slave households; and the history of Genghiz Khan and his descendants was a central theme of all this. As an adherent of the Scottish four-stage interpretation of history, furthermore, Gibbon was deeply interested in nomad pastoralism as he saw it, and in its interactions with settled societies of agriculture, technology and commerce. Invading shepherds had transformed European agriculture in the direction of feudalism, or so he thought with Adam Smith and John Millar; but they had been expelled from China without working any such result³. There was a series of major theses, therefore, which the centrifugal plan of the last volumes led him to explore.

I want to take up and pursue one of these, which however lies somewhat apart from those I have just mentioned. It is to be found in the thirty-third footnote to chapter 64 – Gibbon brought the footnote to a high form of art, which often contains the clue to what is going on in the text – and the passage to which it is appended. In the text, after the usual encomia upon Kubilai, who as always cuts an imposing figure, Gibbon goes on: “Yet this learned prince declined from the pure and simple religion of his great ancestor”; Genghiz, we are to know, had propounded an undogmatic monotheism to his subjects, but this Kubilai disregards; “he sacrificed to the idol Fo; and his blind attachment to the lamas of Thibet and the bonzes of China provoked the censure of the disciples of Confucius”. After that, it is no surprise to learn, the degeneracy and fall of his dynasty was only a matter of time. But the footnote, as sometimes happens, is of considerably more interest. It runs:

The attachment of the khans, and the hatred of the mandarins, to the bonzes and lamas (Duhalde, *Hist. de la Chine*, tom. 1. p. 502, 503) seems to represent them as the priests of the same god, of the Indian *Fo*, whose worship prevails among the sects of Hindostan, Siam, Thibet, China and Japan. But this mysterious subject is still lost in a cloud, which the researches of our Asiatic Society may gradually dispel⁴.

² *DF*, ch. 26: Bury, iii. 71.

³ See J.G.A. Pocock, “Gibbon and the Shepherds: the Stages of Society in the *Decline and Fall*”, *History of European Ideas*, ii (1981), 193-202.

⁴ Bury, vii. 20, for all the above quotations. Bury’s footnote numbering differs from Gibbon’s; here n. 52.

Published in 1788, this footnote caught my eye when I was beginning to explore the text of the *Decline and Fall*, partly because Gibbon was always profoundly interested by the interactions between organized religion and civil magistracy, but also because it clearly showed him aware that there was such a thing as the religion we now know as Buddhism, but aware also that he did not know much about it. From the Jesuit reports which gave him all his knowledge of China, he was able to learn that there had existed several minority religions, one of them the “religion of Fo” and another a vague account of late Taoism; and he knew of the controversy over the inscription which records the presence of Nestorian Christianity under the T’ang. But neither Buddhism nor Taoism was at all accurately described, nor was their importance established, in the literature known to him or to Voltaire – an important actor in the story I shall be telling. The name of “Fo”, I am informed, may represent a Chinese attempt to render either the first syllable of the name “Buddha” or the last syllable of the name Amitabha. But the personality of Fo is always kept quite distinct from that of the Confucian culture-hero Fu-hsi, often spelt Fo-hy in the eighteenth-century West; and Voltaire, in the *Essai sur les Moeurs*, represents him as an Indian supposed to have descended from heaven and offered a specious immortality to the deluded followers of hypocritical monks⁵. As for idolatry, there were of course images, temples and monks in both Buddhism and Taoism; but the Jesuit sources known to the *philosophes* do not seem in these cases to have discriminated so carefully between worship and veneration as they did in the case of the Confucian ancestral tablets. So Kubilai “sacrificed to the idol Fo”, but Gibbon is being a good deal more careful than Voltaire (as was a principle with him). While following his authorities in his text, as the rules of historiography in his time permitted, he used his footnotes to warn his readers that there was much they had still to learn.

How the incidental if fascinating footnote 33 to chapter 64 has turned out a matter of larger significance is what I have next to explain. To do so, I shall have to start from quite a different point in the student’s enquiries into the *Decline and Fall*, and risk the egocentricity which may come of explaining how these enquiries are being conducted. The enterprise, then, takes its departure from Gibbon’s concluding phrase about “the triumph of barbarism and of religion”, and proceeds by collecting and organizing his ideas under these two heads, formed in the process of dialogue with historians of the century preceding his own – say from 1670 to 1770 – whom he considered his peers and with whose minds his

⁵ Voltaire, *Essai sur les Moeurs et l’Esprit des Nations*, ch. 2 (Paris, 1835), 6.1, pp. 35-36.

was clearly engaged. Now the Idol Fo, even when worshipped by Tibetan lamas whom Gibbon probably did consider among the phenomena of nomad savagery, visibly belongs under the heading of religion rather than of barbarism; he is among the phenomena produced by the human mind when confronted by the unknown, which the Enlightenment found so inexhaustibly fascinating. It is therefore not surprising that I was led back to footnote 33 of chapter 64 by way of a study of Gibbon's readings on ecclesiastical and religious history, though I have to confess that I was surprised by the manner in which this came about.

Although it is pretty clear that at some point Gibbon ceased to be what is meant by a Christian believer, it has to be constantly borne in mind that he was a child of the Protestant, not the Voltairean Enlightenment, and that the two are very different in both origin and spirit. This can be traced from that crucial experience of his adolescence, when as a sixteen-year-old undergraduate at Oxford he found himself faced by a choice between Conyers Middleton, who denied that there had been miracles in the second century of the Christian Church on grounds which easily rendered it doubtful that there had ever been miracles at all, and Bossuet, who affirmed the reality of miracles and was undismayed by the implication that they had never ceased⁶. Like many another nervous young Oxford man before and since, Gibbon opted for the church which claimed uninterrupted continuity and uncompromising authority, and announced his conversion to Catholicism. His London Tory family, for deeply interesting reasons which I shall not explore here⁷, made no attempt to reclaim him for the Church of England; instead, they packed him off to Lausanne in Switzerland to study with the enlightened Arminian pastors of the Canton de Vaud, and these, after two years of intensive supervised reading, pronounced him once more *bon protestant*, a term he never minded using of himself. The Tory Gibbons had played the liberal card; they had turned to the Protestant Enlightenment, to that tradition of judiciously scholarly free enquiry into the bases of belief which was considered to offer the best antidote to the extremes of popery, predestination and puritan fanaticism or "enthusiasm". If Gibbon drew, and held that he was following Pierre Bayle in drawing, the conclusion that dogmas too high for understanding had better not be believed either, he never departed from the position that scholarly enquiry into the

⁶ Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of my Life and Writings (Autobiography of Edward Gibbon as Originally Edited by Lord Sheffield)*, ed. J.B. Bury (London, 1972), pp. 46-48.

⁷ See Michel Baridon, *Edward Gibbon et le Mythe de Rome: Histoire et Idéologie au Siècle des Lumières* (Université de Lille: Service de Reproduction des Thèses, 1975), t. 1, pp. 23-26, 34-40, 41-42; Patricia B. Craddock, *Young Edward Gibbon: Gentleman of Letters* (Baltimore, 1982), pp. 51-52.

belief in such mysteries must be pursued. In his remarks about Bayle⁸, and even more about Voltaire⁹, it is a constant that mere scepticism is unscholarly because flippant, and flippant because unscholarly; and behind all his jokes and innuendoes about theologians lies an unalterable determination that the critical investigation of theology must be maintained and not given up. An unbeliever, he went on exploring belief; and even this has something to do with the fall of the Mongol dynasty in China.

When therefore a reader sets out to study the historians of religion and philosophy – not quite the same thing as the ecclesiastical historians, Baronius and Tillemont – who seem to have meant most to Gibbon, whom he cites in ways which show his mind interacting with theirs, such a reader finds himself at the heart of moderate and enlightened Protestantism; with Remonstrants and Arminians such as Jean Le Clerc¹⁰, the Genevan living in Amsterdam; with Huguenot immigrants to the Netherlands such as Jacques Basnage¹¹ and the more enigmatic Pierre Bayle; with Isaac de Beausobre¹², another Huguenot scholar who had made his home in Berlin; with the great Lutheran scholar Johann Lorenz von Mosheim¹³, professor of church history at Göttingen; and with not a few Anglicans, one of whom was the insufferable but very illuminating William Warburton, author of *The Divine Legation of Moses*¹⁴. These are the writers who seem to illuminate the foundations of Gibbon's understanding of the history of religion, and there is a series of attitudes

⁸ E.g., *DF*, ch. 25, n. 45 (Bury, iii. 16): "The sceptic of Rotterdam exhibits, according to his custom, a strange medley of loose knowledge and lively wit".

⁹ Gibbon's wisecracks – he might have called them animadversions – upon Voltaire range through his footnotes from chapter 1, note 87 ("M. de Voltaire, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary Islands upon the Roman Empire") to chapter 67, note 13 ("In his way, Voltaire was a bigot, an intolerant bigot"). His balanced judgment is probably given at chapter 51, note 55 ("Voltaire, who casts a keen and lively glance over the surface of history . . .") Bury, i. 26; vii. 139; v. 419.

¹⁰ Gibbon had and used the many volumes of his *Bibliothèque Universelle, Bibliothèque Critique* and *Bibliothèque Choisie* (Amsterdam, 1686-1718), and other philosophical and historical works: *Opera Philosophica* (Amsterdam, 1689), *Parrhasiana* (London, 1700), *Lives of the Primitive Fathers* (London, 1705), etc. See Annie Barnes, *Jean Le Clerc et la République des Lettres* (Geneva, 1938).

¹¹ Chiefly his *Histoire des Juifs depuis Jésus Christ jusqu'à présent* (Rotterdam, 1707), and with more reservations his *Histoire de l'Eglise* (Rotterdam, 1699) and *Histoire de la Religion des Eglises Reformées* (Rotterdam, 1690).

¹² *Histoire Critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme* (Amsterdam, 1734).

¹³ *De Rebus Christianis ante Constantinum Magnum* (Helmstadt, 1753) and *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Instituta* (Helmstadt, 1755).

¹⁴ Warburton published this in several editions between 1738 and 1755; these are collected in his *Works*, edited by Richard Hurd (London, 1788-1794). I use the 1811 edition.

which they seem to hold in common¹⁵. Though all those whom I have mentioned, after Baronius and Tillemont, were Protestants, it does not follow necessarily that the attitudes I am about to describe are not shared by some Catholic historians. For one thing they were very ecumenical Protestants, who traced their descent from Erasmus and Grotius rather than from Luther and Calvin; and for another, many of their concerns in early church history did not differentiate them from Catholic orthodoxy. Nearly all of them adhered explicitly to the orthodox tradition on the divinity of Jesus Christ and the indivisibility of the Trinity, and condemned the heresies of the third and fourth centuries as unhesitatingly as the Catholics did. What they derived from the Erasmian and eirenic tradition was a willingness to see heresy as the product of honest error and to reconstruct the immensely complicated world in which such errors had been hard to avoid, and this led them at times to condemn the violent and bigoted language of some orthodox Fathers; but this attitude too was not one which Catholics were precluded from adopting. The split arose only when – as was not always the case – the Protestant suggested that the errors of the Fathers disrupted the continuity of Church tradition, only to discover that to the Catholic these errors had rather the paradoxical effect of reinforcing it. Gibbon of course crossed the line which precludes the orthodox from saying that as the mysteries of the Godhead are too high for our reason, the orthodox truths are philosophically as indefensible as the heretical errors; and he went further than that. But this made very little difference to his understanding of the historical situation in which the disputes between heresy and orthodoxy had broken out; on that he shared the perspective of the Arminian and Huguenot historians, and sometimes of the Catholics as well.

This historical situation, they all saw, had been created by the existence of ancient philosophy – for the most part Greek – preceding the Christian revelation. There is an extensive eighteenth-century literature on this subject, and it is of importance for various reasons that much of it goes back into the centuries before Christ to examine the relations between Greek philosophy and the religion of Israel. All these authors, we must remember, were adherents to the biblical chronology, according to which the nations of mankind were descended from the three sons of Noah, whose posterity had dispersed from the plains of Sennaar following the confusion of tongues at the fall of the tower of Babel. It is no good at all laughing at this; historians of the eighteenth century had not yet

¹⁵ For Gibbon's opinion of and relation to these writers, see Owen Chadwick, "Gibbon and the Church Historians", in *Edward Gibbon and the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. G.W. Bowersock *et al.* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 111-124.

encountered the evidence which would force their successors to abandon this chronology, and nearly all the historians Gibbon read – including some of the most modern and scientific¹⁶ – continued to use it. After all, if we are concerned with human history only from the beginnings of literacy, we are employing a space of time not very different from that the Bible affords. Gibbon begins his history in the second century A.D., and is not obliged to tell us what he thinks of the chronological studies which had fascinated his childhood; he merely remarks that it is better to start from a year in which the world was created, no matter how arbitrarily determined, than to start from the birth of Christ and count both backwards and forwards.

But according to the biblical chronology, knowledge of the true god, conserved by the patriarchs until the time of Noah, had been lost at the dispersion from Sennaar and various forms of superstition, idolatry, mythology and polytheism had succeeded it. This had rendered necessary the successive covenants which God had made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the children of Israel encamped at Sinai; recorded in the five books of Moses, these had preserved the true history of God's creation of the world and his dealings with mankind. But now what was to be said of the heathen wisdom, the philosophy of the Greeks and Romans which Western Christians took only less seriously than they did their own revelation? Here the Christian historians, and especially the Protestants, and especially the Erasmian and Arminian historians in the Netherlands tradition when Gibbon read most attentively, all told the same story. They isolated an ancient philosophy which they presented mainly as Greek, and as Platonic; but because they were concerned chiefly with philosophy as it had interacted with the Church in the age of the great doctrinal disputes, the Plato they knew best was that of the neo-Platonists, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Plutarch. Partly on their authority, moreover, a search went on for the non-Greek sources from which Plato, and Pythagoras before him, had learned their philosophy. The biblical chronology militated against the idea, so securely established later on, that Greek thought was *sui generis*, the product of a culture unlike any other; it must have come from the older and more eastern lands in which human history had unfolded. Plato and Pythagoras had visited Egypt; Pythagoras had been a pupil of the Chaldeans; beyond the Chaldeans might be glimpsed the Magians and Zoroastrians and, very dimly in-

¹⁶ E.g., Antoine-Yves Goguet, *De l'Origine des Lois, des Arts, et des Sciences* (Paris, 1758) and Robert Henry, *History of Britain . . . written upon a New Plan* (London, 1771, 1788-1795). It is evident from these authors that a four-stage theory of human history was not incompatible with a biblical chronology.

deed, the Brahmins or Gymnosophists of India¹⁷. Rigorously Christian chronologists might insist that all gentile religions and philosophies were degenerate from the true religion of the patriarchs and covenants, that they had been taught by Abraham or Moses and subsequently misunderstood; but it was not necessary to affirm this, and Arminians who inclined to the view that philosophy had complicated the simplicities of revelation were likely to insist on its autonomous and gentile character. There grew up an "oriental" reading of Greek thought which stressed its kinship with Egyptian and Persian religion.

The account of ancient philosophy which thus emerged had a great deal to do with the doctrinal disputes of the third and fourth Christian centuries, though it possessed a contemporary significance as well to writers of the early eighteenth. Greek thought took on a Platonic appearance, in which God, the ultimate intelligibility, is presented as so absolute and sufficient that it is difficult to believe he would have alienated his substance by creating a world: a world, moreover, so necessarily imperfect by reason of its separation from its maker that the problem of creation is seen to entail the problem of evil. So – the historians continued – the Greeks sought to escape the dilemma by supposing a godhead in whom spirit and matter, creator and creation, were co-eternal and therefore indistinguishable; behind a Magian dualism in which a good god contemplated a world which an evil god had created, they placed an absolute unity of theory and practice, spirit and matter, good and evil. Ormuzd and Ahriman had only emerged, or emanated, from this primordial unity, and the concept of emanation offered ways of overcoming the problem that creation seemed to entail division of the divine substance. But the emanation must in the end return to the unity of its source, and the ancients had not believed in personal immortality in the Christian sense: the soul was a spark thrown off by the eternal light and on its way back to it, and if the generation of souls was an eternal activity the only true immortality lay in rebirth or metempsychosis.

If Plato had seemed at times to suggest that immortality was an eternal individuality which must be eternally blessed or miserable, it seemed certain to both his ancient and modern readers that the tale of Er the Pamphylian was one of his noble lies – a myth adapting to popular understanding or superstition some such higher truth as metempsychosis which only the enlightened could understand¹⁸. Finding all around them

¹⁷ Basnage and Warburton explore all this in great detail. For a briefer statement, see Beausobre, *op. cit.*, i. xviii-xix.

¹⁸ Warburton developed this thesis of "twofold truth" and "secret writing" to lengths at which Mosheim was scandalized (*De Rebus*, pp. 17-18) and Leo Strauss might have been surprised.

forms of polytheism in which dead men were worshipped as gods, the philosophers had decided to represent them all as allegories, or in rare cases emanations, of the eternal intelligibility and to use them as masks behind which truth was known only to the initiates. All the mystery religions, all the underground journeys of the soul through caverns measureless to man and from darkness back into light, were devices behind which the philosophers of antiquity had maintained the freemasonry¹⁹ of the ancient, Magian and Platonic theology. The ancient world had been instructed by philosophers promulgating a twofold truth, exoteric and esoteric; but they had done this only because their notion of God rendered the existence of a world ultimately absurd. Hence the violent contempt for philosophers entertained by Christians, whether ancients like Tertullian or moderns like Warburton (who said they had all been “knaves in practice and fools in theory”²⁰). The Christians had cut the knot of ancient thought by proclaiming that God had made the world because he loved it, and made himself flesh for the same reason. But this rendered it all the more unforgivable that the doctrine of the twofold truth, with all its metaphysical implications, should repeatedly be found in the writings of the early Church Fathers, from Clement of Alexandria through to Origen. If Platonic philosophy had deluded the saints and martyrs into thinking themselves adepts of a secret spiritual life from which, said the Protestants, all forms of monasticism, whether Pythagorean, Essene or Christian, had ultimately grown²¹, it was no wonder that it had simultaneously produced a series of authentic heresiarchs who, like Simon Magus or Mani or Ammonius Sacca, had treated Christian mystery as one more myth to be reconverted into hidden wisdom. If Isaac de Beausobre’s *Histoire du Manichéisme* – which is among Gibbon’s favorite sources – seemed too much of an apologia even for him, it was because Beausobre insisted that Mani and the Manicheans were merely wrestling with the same problems as everybody else, and coming up with not very different conclusions²². When St. Augustine thanks God for delivering him from Manicheism by making

¹⁹ Gibbon was a freemason, but not an illuminist: cf. Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London, 1981) and J.G.A. Pocock, “Superstition and Enthusiasm in Gibbon’s History of Religion”, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, viii (1982), 83-94.

²⁰ Warburton, *Works* (1811), iii. 201.

²¹ Basnage complained of those who went so far as to make Pythagoras himself the founder of monastic orders; see the English translation of *The History of the Jews* by Thomas Taylor (London, 1708), p. 136.

²² Beausobre, *op. cit.*, i. xxi-xxiii, insists that heresy was often honest error, arising from the prevalence of Pythagorean and Platonist philosophy. The same point is made by Basnage (Taylor trans., p. 254).

him apprehend the true doctrine of the creation through the writings of Plato, Beausobre observes that he did well to thank God, since the work of Plato should have plunged him deeper in the errors he was trying to escape. Either it pleased God to open his eyes through a philosophy which ought only to have blinded them, says Beausobre, or we must think of Augustine as one of those animals who instinctively find the antidote growing in the same ground as the poison²³. Gibbon must have enjoyed that, but it does raise a problem.

All these historians castigated ancient philosophy not just for causing trouble in the history of the early church, but because they genuinely feared its revival in their own times. The first generation of the anti-deist polemic, in which they all took part, was the generation most deeply disturbed by the impact of Spinoza, in whose refusal to separate God and nature they saw the pantheism which they called atheism, and heard the authentic voice of the ancient philosophy. It was Jacques Basnage in his *Histoire des Juifs* – again one of Gibbon's favorites – who wrote that Spinoza's true achievement had been to unite the emanations of the Cabalists with the principles of Descartes²⁴. In precisely the way outlined for us by Margaret Jacob, they employed Newtonian science to keep the Creator distinct from his law-governed creation, and ensure that neither Spinozistic pantheism nor Puritan enthusiasm could dominate religion²⁵. But Gibbon lived in the world of Hume, and had no fear of Spinoza; he had seen ways of using Newtonian methodical enquiry against orthodoxy and heresy together. In the last analysis, the Nicene Fathers and most of the Protestant historians had been defending the doctrine of the Word made Flesh against the Gnostics and neo-Platonists to whom it had seemed unthinkable. Gibbon endorsed the orthodox view that it was the intrusion of Platonism which had caused all this debate, but he located the original intrusion on the orthodox side: in the opening words of the Gospel according to St. John²⁶. Once it was declared that the Word had been made Flesh, it had to be explained how this had come about, and the fire was in the stubble. But the words of St. John's Gospel were a revolution within a Platonic world, not a withdrawal from it, and even Nicene orthodoxy was a kind of Christian Platonism. Gibbon thought neither the orthodox nor the heretical positions tenable in the light of experimental reason; but though he did not know of it, there was Newton's carefully concealed Arianism to make it doubtful whether the

²³ Beausobre, i. 479.

²⁴ Basnage, tr. Taylor, pp. vi-vii, 294-298.

²⁵ Margaret Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution* (Ithaca, 1976).

²⁶ *DF*, ch. 21: Bury, ii. 335-347.

Word could be made Flesh in a gravitational universe, and show how easily the old disputes could be revived. Gibbon did know of Newton's contemporary Whiston, and considered him a fanatic, although a liberating one²⁷.

By now the reader may well be wondering what on earth all this has to do with the fall of the Yuan dynasty and the Idol Fo. I did not expect there to be any connection either, and came upon it only through one of those apparent coincidences that occur in the world of research. We must turn now to yet another of Gibbon's principal sources – the *Histoire des Huns, des Turcs et des Mogols*, published in five huge volumes between 1756 and 1758 by Joseph de Guignes. De Guignes, a French *académicien* and as we shall see a good Catholic, had access to all the materials lodged in the *bibliothèque du Roi* by the Jesuit missions in China, with whom he corresponded; he learned Chinese and translated some of the Six Classics (I wish I had space to elaborate his views of the *I Ching*)²⁸. But he also had access to the Arabic, Persian and Turkish sources in the same library, and his *Histoire* is an attempt to recount the full story of the various nomad peoples of the Central Asian steppes and their interactions with the sedentary civilizations east and west. It ranges from the Kin, Yuan and Manchu dynasties in China to the Seljuk, Mamluk and Ottoman military states established by Turks on the ruins of the Abbasid and Byzantine empires. Gibbon, with his fundamental concern for the role of barbarism in world history, was bound to find this project of great importance; and he calls de Guignes' work a "great history" – language he does not use lightly – and says it "has laid open new and important scenes in the history of mankind"²⁹. But he is not uncritical of it, and at times seems to be using it mainly as a work of reference, trying to get behind de Guignes' organization of his sources to the sources themselves, when these are available in language he can read. It is necessary to stress that the *Histoire des Huns* is a work of the older historiography; after carefully organizing the geography and chronology, it diligently reports all the narratives from all the sources, and sometimes these are very unedifying indeed. After reading hundreds of bloody and futile conflicts between bloody and futile khans and emirs, one is tempted to endorse all the strictures against *histoire événementielle* that have been written from Voltaire to Braudel. But at the same time, as the older historiography

²⁷ *Ibid.*, vi. 126.

²⁸ *Histoire Générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols et des autres Tartares Occidentaux*, par M. de Guignes, de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Paris, 1756-1758), ii. 146-148 ("plus il est enveloppé de ténèbres, et plus les Chinois y decouvrent de connoissances").

²⁹ Bury, iii. 75.

permits, de Guignes engages in digressions and commentaries of much greater interest and one has the impression that his historical generalizations are more numerous and advanced when he is writing about nomad interactions with China than about Turkish interactions with the Khali-fat. Chinese history was his real subject, as we should say; but he is insistent – and this is fairly important to Gibbon – that to follow the history of the steppe, barbarous and uncreative though he considers its inhabitants to be, is the way to write what he describes as a unified history of the human race³⁰. He did not mean that he had reached this goal, only that he was helping to make it possible. What he meant by it, however, is something we shall be led to consider.

When I began working through the *Histoire des Huns*, I had it in mind to be on the alert for any references that might occur to the worship of the Idol Fo, but de Guignes himself is insistent on bringing the matter to his reader's attention. He does not consider the *religion de Fo* a species of idolatry, however; he insists that it was a form of Christianity³¹. This is not the only possibility he mentions; when describing its prevalence among the Uighur tribes, he wonders whether Fo might not be Wotan or Odin³², whose worship or whose historic presence was then held to have migrated from Scythia into Scandinavia. But for the most part he relies on the none too secure foundation of a Chinese text or texts saying that in Ta-Tsin they worship in the temples of Fo. Since Ta-Tsin is the Roman empire, argues de Guignes, Fo must be Christ. If that were all he had to say, there would be little point in presenting this paper.

But in his second volume, which is actually the second part of his *tome premier*, de Guignes produces a far more detailed account of the *religion de Fo*, whom for the first time he calls Boudha. I pause to remark that from Fo to Boudha may have seemed a phonological step not much shorter than that from Fo to Wotan. However, de Guignes is here relying upon some Indian literature which he says was translated in Persia by a certain Imam Rukhneddin Muhammad of Samarkand³³; I am at present ignorant of this scholar's identity or his works. But de Guignes now furnishes us with a recognizable if distorted account of the historical Buddha and his teachings³⁴, and I want to draw attention to the context it creates for itself. Fo – de Guignes continues to use that name – appears as a Kashmiri, the founder of the religion of the Samanaeans. We hear of his marriage, his abandonment of his wife and son, and his life in the wilder-

³⁰ De Guignes, v. 228.

³¹ *Ibid.*, i. 30, and many times thereafter.

³² *Ibid.*, i. 42n.

³³ *Ibid.*, i. 226.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 223-238.

ness with his disciples. He is said to have travelled in Persia, and on his deathbed to have assembled his disciples and told them that all he had so far taught them was only an outward truth behind which a deeper teaching was concealed. The eighteenth-century reader, or the twentieth-century reader who knows his mind, here goes on the alert; he has heard this before. The Imam Rukhneddin – if he it is – now gives an account of this religion's two-fold truth, of which the outer or lesser appears at first sight to be Hinduism: the worship of Brahma, Vishnou and "Eswara ou Routren"³⁵ who I suppose is Shiva. These, however, are only emanations – as of course in Hindu theology proper they may appear to be – of a primal reality, inexpressible and incomprehensible, revealed by Fo upon his deathbed; and with the aid of this doctrine of emanations, his religion was able to travel across Asia, annexing and absorbing the various polytheisms it encountered.

A doctrine of metempsychosis accompanied that of the Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva trinity, and provided the bridge between Fo's outer and inner religions. The pious Samanaean might expect to be reborn many times on the lower levels of being which accompanied the emanated deities of polytheism, but at the stage of perfection he would have no more sins to expiate and his soul at death would rejoin the primal unity from which it had been detached. Knowledge of this primal unity was the inner truth of Fo's final teachings: he had called it a void or non-being, since all being was a separation from it. Rukhneddin had used the Persian word *Alem*, and this, said de Guignes, bore the same meaning as the Chinese *chi*, the *Hazarouam* mentioned by the Greek doctor Theodore of Mopsuesta in his account of the inner religion of the Zoroastrians, or the *aeons* of the Gnostics and Manicheans³⁶; the meaning of duration or eternity. From this principle all matter and all gods had been created by way of emanation, and to it they would return.

Quite unmistakably to an eighteenth-century reader, the ancient philosophy has reasserted itself in de Guignes' account with all its familiar characteristics, riding across Asia as far as China and Japan on the wheels of the Greater and Lesser Vehicles. This is a convenient moment at which to remark that de Guignes was an adherent of the biblical chronology, who held that the Chinese were a colony from the plains of Sennaar; in a paper which I have been privileged to see by S.A.M. Adshead of the University of Canterbury³⁷, it is shown how he also be-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 226.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, i. 226-227.

³⁷ "China a Colony of Egypt", in *Essays in Honour of N.C. Phillips*, ed. S.A.M. Adshead, J.E. Cookson and Marie C. Peters (University of Canterbury, for limited circulation, 1983).

lieved that they were originally Egyptians and that their ships had reached America by way of the Bering Straits. This is part of the context in which we must read his account of the *religion de Fo*; the immediate point, however, is that Fo could have been Pythagoras or Zoroaster, Mani or even Spinoza, and that de Guignes' insistence that this religion was ultimately Christian must become an insistence that it was a Christian heresy of the same formation as Manicheism, which had grown up somewhere on the Persian-Indian borderlands into which word of Christ's divinity had penetrated among philosophers who had as usual distorted it. De Guignes leaves it less than clear whether Fo is the name of the original heresiarch whose life the Imam's text had recorded, or the name given to Jesus in some false gospel (there had been plenty of them) of which the Imam's text was a rendering. It is also relevant to mention that he never confounds the *religion de Fo* with Nestorian Christianity, of whose presence in China he knew from other and better sources³⁸. He complains that the Chinese sources fail to distinguish Nestorians from the followers of Fo; but it is hard for both him and Gibbon to decide whether Lamaism is degenerate Buddhism or something older. Were shamans originally Samanaeans³⁹?

Here was a far more detailed and plausible account of the matter than de Guignes' obviously unsatisfactory reliance on vague remarks about Ta-Tsin, or than Voltaire's vulgar *philosophe* account of an Indian idolatry sustained by villainous monks; more even than we might suppose than Gibbon's cautious remark that "this mysterious subject is still lost in a cloud". De Guignes had given a rendering of Buddhism – as we must call it – which reconciled it admirably with the paradigms currently used for organizing the world history of religions, and the version of its doctrines which he had got from Rukhneddin Muhammad would do to be getting on with. There were the makings here of an interpretation of the Buddhist faith and its history, which could have outgrown what we must see as its initial errors, the confusions with Hinduism and Christianity. The question is why Gibbon chose to do nothing about it.

It does not seem reasonable to suppose that he was unaware of all this. He was a close student of de Guignes from the first to the last volume of the *Decline and Fall*; he was interested in the problem of Fo, and the question of Christianity in China. I think one must say that Gibbon's total silence on this part of de Guignes' writings was what the age called a *profond silence*, meaning that there was something intentional about it; and dangerous though it may be, we have to speculate on this silence's

³⁸ De Guignes, iv. 25-26, 115, 125-127.

³⁹ Cf. Bury, vii. 137n.

causes, and its effects. Perhaps the simplest explanation of its cause is that Gibbon merely saw that it would not do. De Guignes' insistence that the *religion de Fo* was a species of Christianity from Ta-Tsin, the Roman empire, looked even worse the clearer it became that its origins were Indian; and Gibbon had followed up the history of the Christian communities in India – the Monophysite “Christians of St. Thomas”⁴⁰ – and knew they were very unlike Fo and his disciples as depicted by Rukhneddin and de Guignes. He did well, we may say, to leave the whole matter to be cleared up by Anglo-Indian research, conducted by the Asiatic Society and Sir William Jones, for whom he expressed great respect⁴¹.

But that is not quite all; the causes of Gibbon's silence are one thing and its effects another. De Guignes' thesis, whatever its shortcomings, had presented Buddhism as one of a chain of religions generated by the “ancient philosophy”, by pre-Christian metaphysics regarding God, the universe and the soul of man; and we have seen that Gibbon in his own way followed the Christian historians' account of both Platonism and Magianism as belonging to that class of religions or philosophies. What separated him from those historians was, in essence, David Hume's *Natural History of Religion* and his essay “Of Superstition and Enthusiasm”, which dismissed the older idea of the ancient philosophy taking shape in the degeneration of the religion of the patriarchs, and argued instead for a universal state of primitive polytheism, out of which philosophy rather than prophecy or revelation had led men for the first time to monotheism⁴². But this did not of itself discredit the orthodox accounts of the religions which philosophy had generated, and Gibbon's descriptions of the Zoroastrian⁴³, Platonic⁴⁴, and Gnostic⁴⁵ creeds were well in accord with what he had learned from his sources. There is, it is by no means irrelevant to note, a chapter of the *Decline and Fall* – the 54th – in which the origins of Western Protestantism itself are traced back to the Bogomils, the Paulicians and ultimately the Gnostics. Gibbon was by no means averse to macrohistorical planning around the concept of the ancient philosophy, and there is no reason that I can see why – disregarding de Guignes' notion that Buddhism was a Christian heresy – he should not have adopted the contention that it was one of a class of religions generated by archaic metaphysics between Ionia and India. I am

⁴⁰ See *DF*, ch. 47: *Ibid.*, v. 148-152.

⁴¹ References to Jones are numerous; e.g., *Ibid.*, iv. 487n, “a scholar, a lawyer, and a man of genius”.

⁴² Cf. “Superstition and Enthusiasm in Gibbon's History of Religion”, n. 19, above.

⁴³ *DF*, Ch. 8: Bury, i. 197-203.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 391-392; ii. 19-20, 335-336; iv. 261-267.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 338-339; v. 94-106.

not trying to argue for the truth of this generalization, but pointing out that Gibbon could easily have adopted it and seeking to imagine what would have been the historiographical consequences if he had. The *Decline and Fall* is very largely about the conflict between Greco-Roman polytheism moderated by Stoic philosophy, and Christian monotheism complicated by Platonic metaphysics. The latter helps bring about the decline of a sceptical and tolerant magistracy and its replacement by monasticism founded upon the idea of a spiritual elite pursuing an inner religion. Let us recall Gibbon's remark that the khans always admired and the mandarins always hated the religion of the bonzes and the lamas, and we shall see that he had in his hands the opportunity to present the *religion de Fo* – originating as de Guignes said it did in the west Eurasian homelands of the ancient philosophy – as a religion of the same kind, interacting with Confucian magistracy as Christianity had with the magistracy of Rome. De Guignes had even emphasized that monasticism was the usual consequence of a religion of emanation, and had cited⁴⁶ Han Yu's famous Confucian blast against Buddhism, which speaks with the very voice of the Enlightenment in denouncing useless and unproductive monks who build temples with the gifts of their wealthy patronesses.

The possible importance of all this is to be found – and could have been known to Gibbon – in a letter to the *Journal des Sçavans* written by de Guignes in 1757 and reprinted by him at the end of the last volume of the *Histoire des Huns*. In this he complains of his colleagues' failure to appreciate the importance of his discovery of the Christian character of the *religion de Fo*, and makes it clear that his target in pressing this argument is Voltaire's *Essai sur les Mœurs*, published in 1756 though allegedly written much earlier⁴⁷. The *Essai sur les Mœurs* is one of the Enlightenment's major attacks on the biblical chronology, and indeed upon the Judeo-Christian framework of *l'histoire universelle*, and – apart from the scurrilous anti-Semitism by which it is pervaded – one of its principal tactics is the magnification of Chinese history as a continuum utterly isolated from that of the western Eurasians. Not only is Chinese chronology exalted and rendered autonomous, thus separating it entirely from the biblical and those which could be reconciled with the latter; Chinese secular history is represented as contained entirely within its own norms, so that its guiding principles are wholly unaffected by those of the Greco-Semitic civilizations⁴⁸. Voltaire even pursued without com-

⁴⁶ De Guignes, ii. 237.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 345-362; the allusion to Voltaire is at p. 348.

⁴⁸ Consult – as Gibbon would say – the first two chapters of the *Essai* in any reliable edition.

punction the implication that, if the descent of all mankind from the sons of Noah were abandoned, it would be simplest to think of the human species as divided into genetically separated races; Chinese were incapable of appreciating European music, he argued, because their organs were differently formed⁴⁹. It was a tactic of Enlightenment historiography to destroy the unity of the human race and human history, because both these unities were founded upon the authority of the Bible; and it was this kind of pluralization that de Guignes set himself to oppose. From his study of the dynastic histories, of the Han wars in Central Asia, of the Liang and the Khitan, of the Mongol conquests and the Yuan decline, he knew very well that the Chinese were a warlike and imperial people resembling the Romans⁵⁰, and that their history was full of turbulence, of the collapse and reconstruction of states, and as he put it "subject to as many revolutions as that of other countries in the world"⁵¹. The myth of the Great Within⁵², of the self-contained and unchanging East, was produced partly by Chinese ethnocentricity and partly by Western anti-Christian polemic, and de Guignes felt himself able to break both down. This was why he declared it his objective to unify the history of the human race; to do so was not an Enlightenment strategy, but an anti-Voltairean one. De Guignes, though a student of Chinese letters, chose to study Chinese history in a perspective centered upon the nomad people who linked it with the history of Rome, Islam and Europe; there is a remarkable passage⁵³ in which he observes that the spread of the Black Death from east to west was not only made possible by the Mongol empire which had unified the Asian trade routes, but exactly paralleled the great snowball effects of nomad history, in which a change of power structures to the north of Korea might send Huns, Avars or Mongols raiding into the heart of Europe. This is the perspective in which we can see the importance to him of his efforts to prove that what we call Buddhism was an offshoot of Christianity. Far more effectively than Nestorianism, which had appeared under the T'ang, been threatened with absorption by Lamaism under the Mongols, and died out after the

⁴⁹ "On demande . . . pourquoi dans la musique ils ignorent encore les demi-tons. Il semble que la nature ait donné à cette espèce d'hommes, si différente de la nôtre, des organes faits pour trouver tout d'un coup tout ce qui leur était nécessaire, et incapables d'aller au-delà. Nous, au contraire, nous avons eu des connaissances très-tard, et nous avons tout perfectionné rapidement" (ch. 1).

⁵⁰ De Guignes, ii. 179-180; iii. 90-93; v. 361.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, i. 77.

⁵² I take this term from the title of a book by Maurice Collis, *The Great Within: an essay on the interactions of China and Europe from the seventeenth century to the present day* (London, 1941).

⁵³ De Guignes, v. 226-228.

fall of the Yuan, the *religion de Fo* had become a persistent counter-theme in Confucian history; to show that it was not merely western, but specifically Christian in origin would effectively reunify the history of the human race. It may have been as part of the same enterprise that de Guignes decided to amend his earlier contention that the Chinese had arrived independently from the plains of Sennaar and argue that they were a colony of Egyptians⁵⁴; the history of the human race could be more effectively unified in a context of biblical chronology than in one of Voltairean polygeneticism and racialism. We see once again the roots of Gibbon's perception that the old-fashioned clerics were better historians than the new-fangled *philosophes* with whom he otherwise agreed; at least, the clerics gave their references⁵⁵.

If Gibbon was aware that de Guignes' interpretation of the *religion de Fo* was part of a strategy to restore Chinese to Christian history and biblical chronology, he may well have resolved that he was obliged to side neither with Voltaire nor with Moses, whom he considered about equally unreliable. But again, we cannot just leave the matter there. Let me venture the generalization that since the time of Voltaire and the Jesuit scholars, it has always been the problem of the Western historian that he feels compelled to write Chinese history in terms of a self-contained Confucianism sealed off from the history of other civilizations: the problem of the Great Within and the cycles of Cathay. Even de Guignes, who was avowedly bent on breaking down the uniqueness of Chinese history by studying it in the perspective of steppe nomadism, found himself trapped in a simple model which presumed the static character of Confucian morals and nomad manners. When the nomads conquered in China, he said, they became Sinicized; when they were driven back to the steppe they reverted to type; and when in the course of time the Manchu now ruling China were expelled, the pattern would repeat itself⁵⁶. As we know, this prediction was to be falsified, and it might have been well if Europeans had possessed a more dynamic model of Chinese history than this. I am seeking to suggest, however, that de Guignes, by means of his very questionable identification of Buddhism with Christianity, was on the verge of providing himself with one, which could have survived that hypothesis: a model in which western religions from Bactria and India entered the Great Within from time to time and became the means of setting up alternative structures and values in conflict with the rule of the

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 517 *verso*, inserted after the index. See Adshead, n. 37, above.

⁵⁵ *DF*, ch. 20, n. 74 (Bury, ii. 312): "I am ignorant by what guides the Abbé Raynal was deceived; as the total absence of quotations is the unpardonable blemish of his entertaining history".

⁵⁶ De Guignes, iii. 93.

Confucian literati. Gibbon hints at this possibility with his antithesis between the khans and the mandarins, and de Guignes's account of the competition between various religions in Yuan history shows that he would have been capable of dealing with the syncretism of other dynasties, T'ang or Ch'ing. He even mentions the case of a religious leader of peasant rebellion in the fourth century A.D. who called himself Fo-tai-tsu (not unlike the Taiping "Younger Brother of Jesus" a century after de Guignes' time) and even Ta-huang-ti, and who is said (by de Guignes) to have been "un bonze du Ta-Tsin"⁵⁷. We must recognize the possibilities latent in de Guignes' interpretation, even where its foundations seemed to contemporaries, and indeed were, most unsound.

Gibbon is firm in accepting the penetration of Christianity into China, though he confines it to the history of Nestorianism and has nothing in this connection to say about Fo. In a footnote to chapter 47, he remarks that those, including Voltaire, who believe the Nestorian inscription of Singanfu to be a forgery "become the dupes of their own cunning, while they are afraid of a Jesuitical fraud"⁵⁸. But it can be observed that even while he rejected the thesis of Chinese immunity from contacts with other civilizations, his view of the imperial system was hardening towards the point where he regarded it as another Byzantium, sterile and unchanging, which might absorb its barbarians but could not grow in response to them. Gibbon did not like great unified empires⁵⁹; he thought the strength of Europe lay in its pluralism. We find an increasing number of remarks to the effect that Confucian philosophy is a screen for despotism; that the Chinese have become a patient and pusillanimous people⁶⁰, lacking either civic or military virtue (he did not learn this from de Guignes, who ranked them with the Romans); and that the literati or "mandarins" may be compared to their disadvantage with the senatorial magistrates of Rome. Where the latter were superstitious in public and philosophical in private, the former, "who affect in public the reason of philosophers, are devoted in private to every mode of popular superstition". I do not know where he had read this, but the passage is that to which the footnote about the reality of Nestorianism is appended and contains the remark "they cherished and they confounded the gods of Palestine and of India"⁶¹, which could almost be an allusion to de

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ii. 239-240; he must have been a Roman and therefore a Christian; since Indian Christianity was Pythagorean, it is not surprising to find monasticism in Siam.

⁵⁸ Bury, v. 150.

⁵⁹ See my "Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and the World-View of the Late Enlightenment", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, x (1977), 287-303, and n. 19 above.

⁶⁰ Bury, vii. 11, 19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, v. 149-150.

Guignes' thesis about Fo. It was not beyond Gibbon's reach to develop a model for Chinese history which would have made it a counter-example to that of Rome, showing the interactions and transformations of secular magistracy and religions originating, as all monotheisms had, in the ancient philosophies of Europe and western Asia; but he did not do so. To that extent he may be said to have reinforced Voltaire against de Guignes, but one doubts if it was his intention to do that. By the time the history of Buddhism, Indian and Chinese, became properly known in the West, the debates between Jesuits, *académiciens* and *philosophes* – between a Christian and a deist reading of Chinese history – were long since over, and modern Sinology was founded on a presumption, originally Voltairean, that China was a Great Within. An opportunity in macrohistory, pointed out by de Guignes, had, I suggest, been lost.

DESCARTES – AN ENTHUSIAST MALGRÉ LUI?

MICHAEL HEYD

In his book which has by now become a classic, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, Richard Popkin directed our attention to two seemingly contradictory facts concerning Descartes¹. On the one hand, Popkin has shown, Descartes's whole enterprise, at least from 1628-1629 onwards, should be regarded as a systematic attempt to combat scepticism. On the other hand, Descartes was soon seen by his adversaries as a "sceptique malgré lui", as a philosopher who in his critical method had given away too much from the beginning, and hence a sceptic in spite of his efforts to construct an alternative to scepticism. Moreover, since his radical doubt threatened to destroy the achievement not only of philosophical truth but of religious truth as well, the charge of scepticism was regularly coupled with that of atheism, Descartes's claims to demonstrate the existence of God and the immortality of the soul notwithstanding².

Alongside the accusations of "scepticism" and "atheism", however, Descartes was sometimes charged, perhaps even more surprisingly, with

¹ Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), Chapters IX, X. (This is a revised and expanded edition of *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* which first appeared in 1960.) The research for this article was done while a visiting professor at the Department of the History of Science, Johns Hopkins University, in 1985-1986. I wish to thank the members of that department, as well as the members of the history department at Johns Hopkins for their warm and cordial hospitality and for their very helpful comments on the first version of this paper. Much of this article was written the following year, while a research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. I am very grateful to the Institute and its staff for providing me with such excellent conditions for scholarly writing. Finally, thanks are due to Dr. Ilana Klutstein of the Hebrew University for going over my translations from Latin into English.

² On the charges of concealed "atheism" against Cartesian Philosophy by Reformed theologians see Ernst Bizer, "Die reformierten Orthodoxie und der Cartesianismus", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, lv (1958), 306-372. On the Anglican critique, especially that of Henry More, see Marjorie Nicolson, "The Early Stages of Cartesianism in England", *Studies in Philology*, xxvi (1929), 356-374, and the recent article of A. Gabbey, "Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata: Henry More (1646-1671)", in *Problems of Cartesianism*, ed. T.M. Lennon, et al. (Kingston, 1982), pp. 171-250. On the Jesuit critique of Descartes accusing him of atheism see Gaston Sortais, "Le Cartésianisme chez les Jésuites français au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle", *Archives de Philosophie*, vi (1929), 253-361, esp. pp. 299-337 (or pp. 47-85 in an edition of the article which was published separately).

the sin of *enthusiasm*. “Enthusiasm” in the seventeenth century was essentially a derogatory label ascribed to groups or individuals who allegedly claimed to have direct divine inspiration or direct access to divine secrets. Among the groups to whom the label was attached were the alchemists, the Paracelsians, practitioners of natural magic, mystics and students of the Cabbala, and above all, various “prophets” and prophesiers. Such “enthusiasts” were seen as posing a challenge no less serious than “scepticism” to the traditional cultural order³.

The fact that Descartes, often considered as the father of modern rationalism, was regarded as an “enthusiast” by some of his critics, may seem indeed even more paradoxical than his image as a *sceptique malgré lui*. Somewhat better known is the related claim that Descartes was linked with the notorious Rosicrucian order since his early years in Germany. The question of young Descartes’s affiliation with “Rosicrucianism” has been reopened recently⁴. We shall focus our attention, however, not on the actual historical links between Descartes and the Rosicrucians, but on the *image* of Descartes in the eyes of his opponents, his image as a “Rosicrucian”, “mystic” and above all, “enthusiast” or “fanatic”. Such an image is, perhaps, almost as important historically as the real influence which “Rosicrucianism” (or the so-called “hermetic” tradition) might have had on the development of Descartes’s thought.

I

The charges against Descartes, accusing him of “enthusiasm” and of affiliations with the Rosicrucians seem to have been prevalent in the 1640s and 1650s and then re-emerged again in the late 1680s and the 1690s. They first came up in the famous debates in Utrecht in the early 1640s concerning Descartes’s philosophy. These debates were instigated by a

³ See on this subject, M. Heyd, “The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Towards an Integrative Approach”, *Journal of Modern History*, liii (1981), 258-280.

⁴ See William R. Shea, “Descartes and the Rosicrucians”, *Annali Dell’Istituto E Museo Di Storia Della Scienza di Firenze*, iv (1979), 29-47. Shea argues that there is enough circumstantial evidence to show that young Descartes was seriously interested in the Rosicrucians and was deeply influenced by the hermetic literature. A similar argument was made a few years earlier by Francis A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London, 1972), pp. 113-117. The sceptical view about these links was stated by Henri Gouhier in his classic book, *Les premières pensées de Descartes* (Paris, 1958), ch. VII, pp. 117-141. See also Auguste Georges-Berthier, “Descartes et les Rose-Croix”, *Revue de synthèse*, xviii (1939), 9-30; Gustave Cohen, *Ecrivains français en Hollande dans la première moitié du XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1920), pp. 402-409; C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme* (Amsterdam, 1954), pp. 230-232, and pp. 662-663 (of French summary by Paul Dibon).

series of theses written by Regius and defended in the period between June 1640 and December 1641. Regius, a Professor of Medicine in Utrecht at that time, was one of Descartes's early supporters. He was soon attacked mainly by Gisbert Voetius, the renowned theologian who was also Rector of the University at that time, as well as by his disciple (then teaching already in Groningen), Martin Schoock⁵. In theses published in December 1641 in response to Regius's theses, Voetius regarded the Cartesian program of the mathematization of physics as clearly savouring of magic. The only alternative to the traditional physics of substantial forms seemed to him to be the magical and Pythagorean view of nature⁶. Two years later, in *Admiranda Methodus Novae Philosophiae Renati Descartes*, published officially by Voetius but written in fact by his protégé, Martin Schoock, the accusations were even more explicit. There, Descartes's claim to find the key to all knowledge in geometry and algebra was likened to the attempts of scientists with a mystical orientation such as Faulhaber to decipher the mysteries of Scriptures with the help of the mathematical sciences⁷.

The chief significance of the *Admiranda Methodus* for our purpose, however, is that it linked Descartes not only with scepticism and atheism, as Popkin has shown⁸, but for the first time, so far as we know, with *enthusiasm* as well. Already the preface declared that the book will prove "that this new method in philosophy leads straight not only to scepti-

⁵ On this episode see Cohen, *Ecrivains*, Chs. XVI-XVII, pp. 535-567, and Cornelia Serrurier, *Descartes, L'homme et le penseur* (Paris & Amsterdam, 1951), Ch. VI, pp. 121-137. On Martin Schoock and his Philosophy teaching in Groningen see Paul Dibon, *La Philosophie néerlandaise au siècle d'or: L'enseignement philosophique dans les universités à l'époque pré-cartésienne, 1575-1650* (Amsterdam, 1954), pp. 180-188.

⁶ These theses were defended by Lambert van den Waterlaet, under the presidency of Voetius on December 23rd and 24th, 1641, in response to theses defended under Regius on December 8th. They were ultimately published in *Testimonium Academiae Ultraiectinae, et Narratio Historica qua defensae, qua exterminatae novae Philosophiae* (Utrecht, 1643), pp. 41-42. The whole text is on pp. 36-57. See also Charles Adam and Paul Tannery eds., *Oeuvres de Descartes* (Paris, 1897-1913, repr. 1957-1958, henceforward, AT), iii. 459-464, 487-491, 511-519. Descartes dismissed this argument with derision. In his letter to Regius of January 1642 he wrote: "Eodem titulo Geometria et Mechanicae omnes essent reiiciendae; quod quam ridiculum et a ratione alienum nemo non videt. Nec hoc sine risu possem praetermittere, sed non suadeo". AT, iii. 504.

⁷ Martinus Schoockius, *Admiranda Methodus Novae Philosophiae Renati Descartes* (Utrecht, 1643), pp. 128-129. See also AT, viii/2. 152, note a. On Schoockius as the author of the *Admiranda Methodus* see Dibon, *La philosophie néerlandaise*, p. 182. Johann Faulhaber (1580-1635) was a noted mathematician who founded his own mathematical school at Ulm. He also had obvious mystical and alchemical interests, attempted to calculate the date of the end of the world on the basis of the books of Daniel and Revelation, and was a believer in the Rosicrucian order. Young Descartes was indeed in contact with him and apparently studied with him in 1620. See the article on Faulhaber by Paul A. Kirchvogel in the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (henceforward, D.S.B.), iv. 549-553.

⁸ Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, pp. 197-198.

cism, but also to enthusiasm, atheism and frenzy"⁹. The fourth part of the book was indeed devoted to these issues, its first chapter showing that Descartes's new method led to scepticism, the second, that it led to enthusiasm, and the third, that it ended up in atheism¹⁰. We shall return below to a closer analysis of the arguments of the chapter on enthusiasm, but the way in which "enthusiasm" was coupled with "scepticism", and "frenzy" is itself highly telling. Descartes's philosophical method was castigated on all these accounts and labelled with all these epithets simultaneously, contradictory as they may seem to us.

These same labels were to follow Descartes and be ascribed to his philosophy repeatedly in the next half a century. Across the Channel, in England during the Interregnum, it was even easier to conflate the new ideas of Descartes with the alchemical, Paracelsian and mystical notions of the so-called "enthusiasts" since some of the latter were making precisely that link themselves, referring almost in the same breath to Paracelsus, Bacon and Descartes¹¹. It is hence hardly surprising that an Anglican conservative humanist such as Meric Casaubon, the son of Isaac, the famous humanist, regarded Cartesianism as one further manifestation of "enthusiasm". Already in his *Essay Concerning Enthusiasm*, in its second edition of 1656, Casaubon mentioned Descartes together with mystical theologians and enthusiastic groups such as the Alumbrados in Spain or the Quakers in England¹². Like Schoockius and Voetius, he focussed on the Cartesian *method*, associating it "with this *Mystical Theologie*, against which I think too much cannot be said"¹³.

In the next generation, between 1660 and 1690, the ideological campaign against Descartes focussed mostly on his alleged "atheism" rather than his "enthusiasm"¹⁴. This was probably the result of the publication of the works of Hobbes and the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of Spinoza,

⁹ "... novam hanc philosophandi methodum, recta non tantum ad Scepticismum, verum Enthusiasmum quoque, Atheismum ac phrenesim ducere". *Admiranda Methodus*, Praefatio.

¹⁰ Chapter II in Part IV entitled "Eadem Methodus recta ad Enthusiasmum ducit" is on pp. 255-261 of *Admiranda Methodus*.

¹¹ See for example, John Webster, *Academiarum Examen* (London, 1653), pp. 76-78. This text was published by Allen G. Debus in *Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century: The Webster-Ward Debate* (London, 1970), pp. 158-160.

¹² Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*, a facsimile reproduction of the second ed. of 1656 with an introduction by Paul J. Korshin (Gainesville, Florida, 1970), pp. 172-173. On Casaubon see also, Michael S. Spiller, "Concerning *Natural Experimental Philosophie*", *Meric Casaubon and the Royal Society* (The Hague, 1980), ch. I.

¹³ *A Treatise*, p. 173.

¹⁴ It should be stressed that we are not dealing here with the strictly *philosophical* controversy raised by Cartesianism in that period, but rather with the *labels* ascribed to Descartes's philosophy. On the former subject, see among other studies, A. Watson, *The Downfall of Cartesianism, 1673-1712* (The Hague, 1966).

both considered disciples of Descartes¹⁵. True, the label of “enthusiasm” was sometimes resorted to, but mostly, it seems, under the influence of Schoock’s *Admiranda Methodus* rather than as an argument developed independently¹⁶.

Descartes’s alleged “enthusiasm” became once again a common theme of anti-Cartesian polemics in the 1690s. The prevalence of this label in connection with Descartes was clearly reflected in a satirical work published anonymously in 1690 by the Jesuit father Gabriel Daniel and entitled *Voiage du monde de Descartes*¹⁷. That work (aiming principally at the Cartesian sharp distinction between body and soul) related in a satirical fashion the voyage in the upper spheres of the disembodied souls of the narrator, of Mersenne, and of another old friend of Descartes. On their way to visit Descartes in the third heaven, they meet the souls of other philosophers, among them Aristotle, and later on, Voetius who serves as Aristotle’s secretary. He suggests to them a treaty of accommodation and cessation of arms between the followers of Aristotle and the disciples of Descartes (clearly reflecting here the philosophical opinions of Gabriel Daniel himself). One of the articles of that treaty stipulates that the Cartesians will refer to Aristotle with more respect, whereas the

¹⁵ On the campaign against Descartes in the 1670s, especially in Holland and France see F. Bouillier, *Histoire de la philosophie cartésienne* (Paris, 1868: repr. 1970), i. chs. XXII, XXVI, XXVII, and Edward G. Ruestow, *Physics at seventeenth and eighteenth-Century Leiden: Philosophy and the New Science in the University* (The Hague, 1973), pp. 73-78. See also H.-J. Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII^e siècle* (Geneva, 1969), pp. 877-878. For the parallel debates in England, especially the polemics of Henry More against Descartes see Nicolson, “Early Stages”, and Gabbey, “Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata”.

¹⁶ An example of such an implicit reference is a dissertation defended by Georgius Sebastian Kraus in Altdorff in 1677 under the presidency of Johann Christoph Sturm, *De Cartesianis et Cartesianismo Brevis Dissertatio* (Altdorff, March 31, 1677), pp. 18-19, where Descartes is accused of scepticism, enthusiasm and atheism, in the same manner and order as Schoock has accused him. This dissertation may be found in the British Library. Sturm was in fact an experimental scientist, the founder of the *Collegium Curiosum sive Experimentale*, and the teacher of J.G. Doppelmayr. See *D.S.B.* iv. 166, article on Doppelmayr, and *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, xxxvii. 39-40.

¹⁷ *Voiage du monde de Descartes* (Paris, 1691). The work was translated two years later into English by T. Taylor of Magdalen College, Oxford, and dedicated to his friend James Ludford of Ansely, *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius* (London, 1692). Father Daniel (1649-1728) entered the Jesuit Order in 1667, taught Rhetoric, Philosophy and Theology and was later a librarian in a Jesuit house in Paris, but became particularly famous as an historian. He received from Louis XIV the title of *historiographe de France*, and his *Histoire de France* was highly regarded by Voltaire. See Augustin de Backer and Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque des Ecrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Liège, 1853-1861), ii, cols. 1795-1816, and Sortais, “Le Cartésianisme”, pp. 308-314 (pp. 56-62 in the separate edition of the article). As we shall presently see, Daniel was not a committed Aristotelian in Philosophy, but was rather interested in a synthesis of Ancient and Modern Philosophy (*Philosophia Nova Antiqua*).

Aristotelians will refrain from calling Descartes “Enthusiast”, “Madman”, “Heretick” or “Atheist” – all of these obviously common labels used by the opponents of Descartes at that time¹⁸.

Father Daniel did not know yet of Descartes’s dreams of 1619, and did not refer to his Rosicrucian interests. Just one year later however, Adrien Baillet published in his famous biography, *Vie de Mons. Descartes*, extracts from Descartes’s early writings, including the *Cogitationes Privata* and the *Olympica* which contained the description of his dreams of 1619¹⁹. While Baillet pointedly rejected the notion of Descartes as a member of the Rosicrucian order, his *Vie de Mons. Descartes* included enough material to give new life to the association of Descartes with enthusiasm in general and Rosicrucianism in particular²⁰. It has been put forward most systematically in the satirical work by Bishop Huet, *Nouveaux Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire du Cartésianisme* published anonymously in 1692, with a sec-

¹⁸ [Gabriel Daniel], *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius*, p. 135, and in general, pp. 119-155. In the French original, the term for “enthusiast” is *visionnaire*, see *Voyage du monde de Descartes*, p. 140. In the Latin translation of that text, *Iter per mundum Cartesii* (Amsterdam, 1694) the term is *fanaticus* (p. 140). Daniel also hinted at the similarity between Cartesianism and magic. At a certain point he had Descartes’s friend say to the narrator: “you see the *Cartesian Philosophy* teaches without any Sin, what *Apollonius Thyanaeus* and many other *Magicians* could not do, without first giving themselves to the Devil”. *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius*, p. 50.

¹⁹ A. Baillet, *La Vie de Monsieur Descartes* (Paris, 1691). An abridged edition appeared in 1692, *La Vie de Mons. Descartes . . . réduite et abrégé* (1692; 2nd ed. 1693) and that edition was translated into English the following year as *The Life of Monsieur Des Cartes containing the History of his Philosophy and Works. As also The Most Remarkable Things that Befell him during the Whole Course of his Life*, tr. from the French by S.R. (London, 1693). The *Olympica* was among Descartes’s papers in the possession of Clerselier. They were bequeathed after his death in 1684 to the abbé Jean-Baptiste Legrand who instigated Baillet to write a biography of Descartes, and provided him with Descartes’s papers, including the *Olympica*. Extracts of this text, as well as other papers, were also copied by Leibniz when he visited Clerselier in Paris in 1675-1676. The original texts (with which Poisson was also acquainted) have unfortunately been lost, but Leibniz’s extracts are now among his papers in the Royal Library in Hanover. See also AT, i. xlvii; Leonard J. Wang, “The Life and Works of Adrien Baillet” (Columbia Ph.D. diss., 1955), and the recent article of Gregor Sebba, “Adrien Baillet and the Genesis of His *Vie de M. Des-Cartes*”, in *Problems of Cartesianism*, pp. 9-60.

²⁰ Baillet, *Vie de Mons. Descartes*, Livre II, Ch. II, pp. 87-92. Baillet’s famous account of Descartes’s dreams of 1619 is in the previous chapter, pp. 81-86. There, he quoted Descartes himself from the *Olympica* referring to his “enthusiasm”, clearly using this term in a positive sense: “Il nous apprend que le dixième (*sic!*) de Novembre mil six cent dix-neuf, s’étant couché tout rempli de son enthousiasme, et tout occupé de la pensée d’avoir trouvé ce jour là les fondemens de la science admirable, il eut trois songes consécutifs en une seule nuit, qu’il s’imagina ne pouvoir être venus que d’en haut”. (*Ibid.*, p. 81: see also AT, x. 181). Later on, Baillet quoted Descartes as referring to “le Génie qui excitoit en luy l’enthousiasme dont il se sentoit le cerveau échauffé depuis quelques jours, luy avoit prédit ces songes avant que de se mettre au lit, et que l’esprit humain n’y avoit aucune part”. (*Ibid.*, p. 85, and AT, x. 186).

ond edition in 1711²¹. That work consisted of a fictional story according to which Descartes did not die in Sweden in 1650, but rather fabricated his sickness and death, slipping away to Lapland where he had a devoted group of disciples waiting for him. Possessing the secret to prolong his life up to five hundred years, Descartes tells his friend Chanut, the French ambassador to Sweden, the story of his life, particularly a detailed relation of his dreams in 1619 as well as his relationship with and admission to the Rosicrucian order. Huet used to its utmost Baillet's account of Descartes's dreams, thus clearly depicting him as a self-confessed enthusiast who claimed to have had direct divine inspiration²². Departing however from Baillet's account, Huet's Descartes did indeed succeed in forming contact with the Rosicrucians and climbed fast in the hierarchy of that society, becoming ultimately one of its inspectors. The consequences were clear:

J'ay renoncé au mariage, j'ay mené une vie errante; j'ay cherché l'obscurité et la retraite; j'ay quitté l'étude de la Géométrie, et des autres sciences, pour m'appliquer uniquement à la Physique, à la Médecine, à la Chymie, à la Cabale et aux autres sciences secrètes²³.

So far from being the rationalist philosopher, Descartes was depicted by Huet as a typical Paracelsian enthusiast. The work was obviously satirical and cannot be taken seriously as expressing Huet's real views, let alone as historical evidence for Descartes's real links with the Rosicrucians, but it is nevertheless significant as an expression of the *image* of Descartes in the eyes of his opponents. For the sceptical humanist Huet, Descartes's alleged association with the Rosicrucians served to highlight the esoteric nature of his method, the invisible and disguised nature of his career, and indeed, Descartes's own credulity. He also depicted him as a founder of a religious sect, rather than of a philosophical school. Thus, Descartes hoped that his disciple Regius would become "le premier martyr du Cartésianisme" but instead, he turned out to be its

²¹ We shall use the 1711 edition of this text: [P.-D. Huet], *Nouveaux mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Cartésianisme*. The work was written as a sequel to his *Censura Philosophiae Cartesianae* (1689) and in reaction to P.S. Régis's response to that book, *Réponse au livre qui a pour titre "P.D. Huetti Censura Philosophiae Cartesianae"* (Paris, 1691). The *Nouveaux mémoires* was indeed addressed to Régis. It is worth noting, however, that in his youth, while studying at Caen, Huet was quite attracted to Cartesianism. See *Memoirs of the Life of Peter Daniel Huet*, written by himself, tr. from Latin by John Aikin, i (London, 1810), pp. 29-30. There, Huet says "I long wandered in the mazes of this reasoning delirium (*Ibid.*, p. 30). For a short article on Bishop Huet (1630-1721), focussing mainly on his scepticism, see Richard H. Popkin, "Huet, Pierre-Daniel", *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, iv. 67-68. See also Bouillier, *Histoire de la philosophie cartésienne*, i. ch. XXVIII.

²² *Nouveaux mémoires*, pp. 28-29.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

“premier schismatique”. Indeed, Huet ironically had Descartes say about Regius “cet insolent me traita à son tour de visionnaire et d’enthousiaste”²⁴. The term “enthusiasm” once again assumed here a negative connotation.

A few years later, an English Catholic, John Sergeant, expressed a similar view of Descartes, relying too on Baillet’s biography. Like Huet, Sergeant did so in the course of a debate with a Cartesian, in his case, the Franciscan Antoine Le Grand²⁵. Yet, whereas Huet was a sceptic who held a fideistic position on religious matters, Sergeant was essentially an Aristotelian and believed that an updated Aristotelian philosophy was the best response to the sceptical challenge. Sergeant focussed his critique on Descartes’s method, and we shall return to the epistemological issues involved in that critique below. At this point it is important to note that he referred to extracts from the *Olympica* published by Baillet in order to fortify his claim that Descartes was in fact an enthusiast. In a tract written in 1699 and entitled *Raillery defeated by Calm Reason* he wrote:

Whence, I took notice of what [method]. . . of *Cartesius* who (as the Writer of his Life tells us), by endeavouring to bring himself to question all the Certainty he had received from his senses, fell into Fits of Enthusiasm²⁶.

Sergeant was less concerned than Huet with Descartes’s life and personality, but for both of them, Cartesianism was linked with enthusiasm, and indeed with Rosicrucianism. Furthermore, both relied on Baillet’s biography to strengthen their case in depicting Descartes as an “enthusiast”.

One final reference to Descartes as an “enthusiast” should be mentioned – that of Jonathan Swift in his famous *A Tale of a Tub*, first published in 1704. We shall return to this text below, but it is worth

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁵ J.S. [John Sergeant], *Non Ultra, or a Letter to a Learned Cartesian* (London, 1698). Like Huet, Sergeant was linked for sometime with Bossuet and his circle. On Sergeant see the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (henceforward, *D.N.B.*), and John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (London, 1975), pp. 67-69 on his role in the English Catholic church in that generation. Antoine Le Grand (1629-1699) was a Franciscan friar from Douay who was sent to England on the English mission and settled in Oxfordshire. He was an ardent advocate of the Cartesian method and was involved in a long debate with Sergeant to which we shall have occasion to return. Sergeant’s *Non Ultra* was just one text in that debate. On Le Grand see *D.N.B.*, and John K. Ryan “Anthony Legrand (1629-1699): Franciscan and Cartesian”, *The New Scholasticism*, ix (1935), 226-250, which includes a bibliographical summary of his writings.

²⁶ John Sergeant, *Raillery defeated by Calm Reason: or the New Cartesian Method of Arguing and Answering Expos’d. In a letter to all lovers of Science, Candour and Civility* (London, 1699), p. 14. The text (and the quotation above) was also directed against Malebranche. Sergeant defended here his *Method to Science* to which we shall presently refer, a work fiercely attacked by Le Grand.

stressing at this point that Swift was clearly influenced by previous critics of Descartes, especially by Casaubon, in regarding him as an enthusiast and moreover, as mentally deranged²⁷.

II

Thus, in the eyes of some of his opponents, Descartes's image was that of "enthusiast". Whether taken seriously or not (let alone, whether true or not), these allegations indicate that for conservative thinkers in the seventeenth century, Cartesianism, so far from being a response to the challenge of enthusiasm, was in fact seen as one of its manifestations. The term "conservative critics" by which we have designated the critics of Descartes is very broad, of course, and as such, somewhat hollow. They were a heterogeneous group, from different countries, from various religious camps (Reformed, Anglican, Catholic), spreading over two generations in time. Yet, disparate as the group was, it had important common characteristics. Socially speaking, all of them regarded themselves as defending established institutions, whether the universities, the Church or religious orders such as the Jesuits. Intellectually speaking, they were humanists, Aristotelians, and sometimes, as in the case of Gabriel Daniel, eclectics who wished to achieve a synthesis between traditional philosophy and the new one²⁸. They associated Cartesian philosophy with "enthusiasm" because they viewed it as a threat both to the traditional intellectual order, and to the established institutions with which they were associated.

Intellectual and social considerations were thus intermingled in the view of Descartes as an "enthusiast". To these should be added psychological and theological motives as well. We shall focus our attention in this article primarily on the epistemological level, because it is here that the parallel with the charge of "scepticism" against Descartes is most manifest. Yet, since the epistemological dimension cannot be severed from the social, psychological and theological ones, we shall refer to them as well.

²⁷ See Michael R.G. Spiller, "The idol of the Stove: The Background to Swift's Criticism of Descartes", *Review of English Studies*, xxv (1974), 15-24.

²⁸ It should be stressed that whereas in the sixteenth century, humanism was an innovative movement, often distinguished from (and even contrary to) traditional scholastic Aristotelianism, by the seventeenth century, the humanists were defending the "ancients" as against the "moderns", and humanism was regularly combined with Aristotelianism in the curriculum of many of the Colleges and Universities, both Protestant and Catholic. This fusion, and the conservative character which humanism assumed in the seventeenth century is clearly manifest in the work of Meric Casaubon, especially if we compare him to his father, Isaac Casaubon.

The humanist and Aristotelian critics of Descartes were conscious of the fact that the “Cartesian revolution” was – among other things – a consequence of and a response to a crisis of humanistic scholarship and traditional scholasticism in the early seventeenth century. In this respect, they would have agreed with Richard Popkin’s interpretation of Descartes’s philosophy. Meric Casaubon saw that crisis as the result of the very flowering of humanistic scholarship which brought about an “explosion of knowledge”. Quite expectedly, he regarded the generation of Scaliger, Lipsius and his own father, Isaac Casaubon, as the one in which humanistic learning reached its peak:

It is my opinion that learning . . . in this last age, some three or fowre score years agoe, was brought to that perfection, as noe other age of the world ever saw it in But no wonder, if it did not hold long. It was come to that height, that for a man to make himselfe considerable (besydes competent witt and judgment, without which nothing can be done, and are not, to that degree, every mans happines) soe much labour, soe much industrie was required, as is enough to fright any whom God hath not endowed with extraordinarie courage, and strength of bodie withall.

Consequently –

Any new project, promising new discoveries of a shorter way, must needs be very acceptable unto most²⁹.

Casaubon mentioned several attempts to devise a new method which would provide a short-cut to knowledge: the work of Ramus, as well as the earlier attempts of Raymond Lull, the mystical theologian Johannes Trithemius and later, the programmes of the educational reformer Comenius. He focussed his attention, however, on Descartes’s *Discourse on Method* which he clearly put in the context of the mystical and Pansophic reactions to humanism³⁰. Indeed, the search for a short-cut, for direct ac-

²⁹ This quotation is from a later text of Casaubon which remained in manuscript until recently and which was written apparently in 1667. Extracts of this text were published by Spiller, *Casaubon*, Appendix II. Spiller gave it the title “On Learning”. The original manuscript is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS Rawlinson D 36.1). The whole text has also been printed in Spiller’s B.Litt. thesis, “Conservative Opinion and the New Science, 1630-1680: With Special Reference to the Life and Works of Meric Casaubon” (Oxford, 1968). We have consulted the thesis as well as Casaubon’s manuscript, but will refer the reader also to the extracts published in Spiller’s book. The above quotation is from p. 21 of the Manuscript, in Spiller, *Casaubon*, pp. 202-203.

³⁰ “On Learning”, pp. 21-22, 28-32; In *ibid.*, pp. 203, 209-211, although not all of Casaubon’s interesting critique of the search for method has been published by Spiller in his book. It should be also stressed that this type of criticism, raised by Casaubon against Descartes, the educational reformers, and the new scientists, was part of a broader attack on what he saw as *philistine* tendencies of his time in general. See M. Hunter’s Essay Review of Spiller’s book in *Annals of Science*, xxxix (1982), 189-190.

cess to knowledge, was a typical characteristic of the enthusiast and one reason why Casaubon regarded Descartes as an enthusiast³¹.

Towards the end of the century, John Sergeant similarly regarded the "short cut" to learning pretended by Descartes as one indication of his "enthusiasm". Yet, as an Aristotelian, he saw the crisis to which Descartes tried to respond as a crisis of scholastic philosophy, a "crise pyrrhonnienne" brought about by scepticism, rather than as a crisis of humanism. Sergeant admitted that following the great variety of commentaries on Aristotle, there was a real danger of complete scepticism. In reaction to that danger, thinkers like Thomas White, Sir Kenelm Digby and Cartesius came to the fore. "All of them promis'd *Science*, which kept up those Men's drooping Spirits from Despair of Truth"³². White and Digby were essentially Aristotelian in their principles (as well as Catholics and acquaintances of Sergeant). Descartes, by contrast, "ravell'd all the schemes hitherto woven by others, moulled *all* the World in a New Frame, and set up for his Single Self, without any Co-partner"³³. Like Casaubon, Sergeant viewed the Cartesian response to the intellectual crisis of the early seventeenth century as but another manifestation of enthusiasm. So far from providing a way out of that crisis, a new and firmer foundation for the socio-cultural order, Descartes's philosophy was regarded as subversive of that order. In this respect, there was indeed a clear parallel between the charge of scepticism and that of enthusiasm, levelled against Descartes.

This parallel was explicit as early as 1643, in Schoock's *Admiranda Methodus*. As in the case of scepticism, Schoockius did not argue that Descartes was consciously an "enthusiast", only that his philosophy necessarily led to such a stance³⁴. The Cartesian recommendation to forsake the senses and to rely exclusively on the mind and on the examina-

³¹ It is worth noting that already in his earlier *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*, Casaubon made a significant and ironic allusion concerning Descartes's new method: "if he would have dealt ingenuously he might in two or three lines, that had contained the names but of three or four herbs, have prescribed a farre shorter way". *Ibid.*, p. 172. Whereas for Voetius, Descartes's program for the mathematization of nature seemed similar to that of the Cabbalists and mystics, for Casaubon, the Cartesian method was similar not only to that of the mystics but, in its presumed short-cuts, quite like the herbal medicine practiced by quack-physicians.

³² Sergeant, *Non Ultra*, letter dedicatory (addressed to Sir Edward Southcot). On Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665) see *D.N.B.*, and *D.S.B.*; on Thomas White, often referred to as Albion or Blacklo (1593-1676), also see *D.N.B.* and *D.S.B.*

³³ Sergeant, *Non Ultra*, letter dedicatory. On the role of Sergeant and White in the English Catholic community as leaders of the so-called "Blackloist" faction, see Bossy, *Catholic Community*, pp. 62-67.

³⁴ *Admiranda Methodus*, p. 255.

tion of its ideas seemed to Schoockius most dangerous³⁵. This was true even for such axioms as “the whole is greater than any of its parts”:

For when one first is taken away from the senses to the contemplation of these axioms, which seem to be engraved in him, one abandons the rule and its norms, and can easily feign to himself forsaken axioms which, had he held to the norm, would be found false and unworthy of faith³⁶.

For Schoockius and Voetius, the senses were an indispensable source of knowledge and a guarantee that this knowledge was public and well-founded in reality, rather than subjectively feigned. Exclusive reliance on reason, as advocated by Descartes, not only undermined the basis for secure knowledge, thus leading to scepticism, but smacked of “enthusiasm” too. It bestowed a prerogative to the individual human mind with no external control.

This was especially true concerning Descartes’s proof of the existence of God, which seemed to Schoock to be strikingly close to the contemplation of the mystics. Though he substituted the term “mind” for the traditional mystical terms of “internal man”, “spirit”, or “the talk of God”, in substance, Descartes’s argument was very similar to that of the mystics and enthusiasts:

For indeed, the mind immersed in profound meditation, discovers the existence of God, according to Descartes, without any discourse. God should be discovered in existence either immediately, or by mediation of the idea [of God]... how easily is it prone to lead him to most profane enthusiasm³⁷.

³⁵ “Perculosae vero aleae plenissima haec methodus est”. *Ibid.*, pp. 225-256.

³⁶ “Quando primo enim a sensibus abducitur ad contemplationem eorum axiomatum, quae ei insculpta videntur, exiit amussi ac norma sua, sibi que relicta facile axioma quod fingere potest, quod si normae exhibeatur, postea falsum ac subleste fidei deprehendatur”. *Ibid.*, p. 256. In his famous letter to Voetius, which was a response to the *Admiranda Methodus*, Descartes argued that such epistemological maxims made the contemplation of divine matters impossible. See AT, viii. 171-172. We shall return to this point presently.

³⁷ “Enimvero mens profundae meditationi immersa, Deique existentiam in se absque ullo discursu, hoc expresse enim Renatus vult, inveniens, Deum sibi in existentem aut immediate, aut mediante idea . . . invenire debet, quam facile vero sic ad profanissimum Enthusiasmum ei aditus datur”. *Ibid.*, p. 258. Schoockius referred here to Descartes’s phrase in the *Postulata* in the *Rationes dei existentiam et animae a corpore distinctionem probantes More Geometrico* included in his response to the Second Objections: “diu multumque in natura Entis summe perfecti contemplanda immorari, quo [in the original – “immorentur . . . et”] absque ullo discursu cognoscat Deum existere”. See AT, vii. 163, l. 23-28. Descartes summarized there in a few sentences (which Schoock did not quote) his ontological proof for the existence of God. Later on Schoockius argued that such contemplation of God, relying only on the limited and imperfect human mind, necessarily meant ascribing imperfections to God himself. *Ibid.*, p. 260. Descartes responded to that point by concluding ironically that apparently Schoock and Voet did not wish to think about

Since God (or the idea of God) was in him, Descartes could conclude with other enthusiasts that he was in God, and that everything he did, he did by the existence of God, thus reaching the antinomian conclusion that he could not sin³⁸. Once again, Schoock did not argue that this was Descartes's explicit position, only that it was a potential and dangerous conclusion for those who followed his method. For these reasons, Descartes was comparable, according to Schoock, to enthusiasts such as Sebastian Franck, Henry Nicolai, Theodore Coorenherit and Jan van Ruysbroeck. Indeed, he saw Descartes's meditations as far more effective in leading men to the blasphemous pronouncement "I am God" than any of the traditional mystical meditations³⁹.

This epistemological and theological critique had social implications as well. Just as the above-mentioned enthusiasts "began to despise Scripture", and "thrust themselves upon that which the mind dictated as of divine oracles"⁴⁰, so did the Cartesian method despise traditional authorities. Not by chance did Schoock compare the contemplations of Descartes and his disciples to the reductionist methods of autodidacts⁴¹. Cartesian epistemology was akin to "enthusiasm" not only because it rejected the senses and relied exclusively on the mind, but because it cast aside traditional authorities and claimed to be innovative, individualistic and completely independent.

The same epistemological stance was taken by most of Descartes's critics in the next fifty years. They regarded his method as individualistic and private in character, innovative, secretive, indeed, irrational, and

God lest they be regarded as enthusiasts, or lest they attribute any imperfection to Him. *Epistola ad Voetium*, AT, viii. 172. Indeed, while clearly distancing himself from "enthusiasm", Descartes was obviously influenced by the contemplative tradition and by Catholic spirituality. See also the following two notes.

³⁸ "Deum sibi inexistentem Cartesianus quis deprehendit per ideam, cur non ergo instar Enthusiastae sic etiam concludat: Deus in me est, et ego in Deo, ergo per Deum inexistentem omnia ago et consequenter neque pecco neque peccare possum . . .". *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259. In his letter to Voetius, Descartes responded specifically to that argument, saying that such a conclusion could be elicited only by the enthusiasts themselves: "Quas consequentias fateor a solis Enthusiastis, deliris, et vestri similibus elici posse". *Epistola ad G. Voetium*, AT, viii. 172, l. 9-10.38.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260. It is worth mentioning that recent scholarship concerning Descartes has gone some way in a similar direction. Thus, Amos Funkenstein has shown that seventeenth-century philosophers, including Descartes, tended to equate human knowledge with divine knowledge, in essence if not in extent. See Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (Princeton, 1985), especially p. 291. On a somewhat different level, Gary Hatfield has pointed to Descartes's debt to the long tradition of spiritual meditations. See G. Hatfield, "The Senses and the Fleshless Eye: The *Meditations* as Cognitive Exercises", in *Essays on Descartes' Meditations*, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986).

⁴⁰ *Admiranda Methodus*, p. 257.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258.

hence, as “enthusiastic”. Thus Meric Casaubon expressed himself in the following way in his tract *On Learning*:

What a mysterie doth he make of his *Ego sum: ego Cogito*, to attaine to the excellencie whereof, a man must first strip himselfe of all that he hath ever knowne, or beleevd. Hee must renounce to his naturall reason, and to his senses; nothing but caves and solitudes will serve the turne for such deepe meditation, such profound matter: rare inventions to raise the expectation of the credulous, and in the end to send them away pure Quacks, or arrand Quakers⁴².

The comparison of Descartes to the Quakers is highly significant, of course. Indeed, like Schoock, Casaubon regarded Cartesian philosophy as one example of mystical theology, a type of “contemplative and philosophical enthusiasm” to which he devoted the third and longest chapter in his *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*. His objection to that mystical theology was not only its heathenish, pagan origins, or the fact that it was derogatory to Scripture, but that “it deprives a man of the use of Reason”⁴³. Indeed, Casaubon declared himself a rational thinker par excellence:

I am one, I confesse, that think reason should be highly valued by all creatures, that are naturally rationall. Neither do I think we need to seek the *Image of God* in man elsewhere, then in perfect Reason; such as he was created in. *Holinesse* and *Righteousnesse* were but fruits of it⁴⁴.

Yet, for Casaubon, as for Schoockius and Voetius, reason was closely linked with the *senses*, and in this respect he was not only a humanist, but a follower of the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition, rather than the Platonic one. Intense contemplation might stop the influence and hinder the operation of the senses, but by thus alienating itself from the senses, the mind paved the way to ecstasy, trance and enthusiasm⁴⁵. At its extreme, Casaubon regarded this disengagement of the mind from the senses as pathological, a manifestation of melancholy. No wonder then, that he saw Descartes’s effort to free himself from the senses as an irrational act of enthusiasm, similar to the ecstasy of the Alumbrados or the Quakers⁴⁶.

Casaubon’s critique of Descartes also aimed at the individualistic and authoritarian character of his philosophy, which was another reason for

⁴² “On Learning”, pp. 23-24, in Spiller, *Casaubon* p. 205.

⁴³ *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*, p. 171.

⁴⁴ *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*, p. 173.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173, and see also the quotation above from “On Learning”. The link between “enthusiasm” and melancholy was a recurrent theme in the *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*. I shall deal with this topic in greater detail elsewhere.

designating it as “enthusiasm”. Already in 1655 Casaubon compared Descartes to Minos and to Numa Pompilius who wished their laws to be received as Oracles, and for that reason tried to persuade their people “that they did not come by them [these laws] as other men did by theirs; but that they were the fruits of Caves, and darknesse”⁴⁷. In 1667, in his unpublished treatise *On Learning*, Casaubon elaborated on that theme and described Descartes’s method as a manifestation of pride and self-conceit, causing him to lose his wits:

But for his *Method*: I tooke him for one, whom excessive pride and self-conceit (which doth happen unto many) had absolutely bereaved of his witts. I could not beleieve that such stuffe, soe ridiculous, soe blasphemous (as I apprehended it, and doe still) could proceed from a sober man. A cracked brain man, an Enthusiast, such a one as Acosta gives us the relation of, and I out of him in a booke of that subject, I took him to be⁴⁸.

Casaubon compared Descartes here to a priest in Peru whose case (as reported by Joseph Acosta, a Jesuit Spaniard) he described in detail in *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*. That priest pretended to be King, Pope, Law-giver and Redeemer, and was subsequently put on the stake for heresy⁴⁹.

The Cartesian method also implied the rejection of tradition, a rejection which had obvious social implications as well. Casaubon made these implications clear by reference both to Descartes and to Hobbes, though mainly to the former:

Certain it is, the designe of both is and hath beene; but of Cartesius particularly; that all other bookes and learning should be layd asyde, as needles, but what came from him, or was grounded upon his principles. And if all other bookes and learning, as he would have it, there would be little use of libraries or Universities, which is that many would have⁵⁰.

For Casaubon, living in England throughout the Interregnum period, when the Universities were under fierce attack on the part of the radicals, Descartes was clearly seen as yet another of the “enthusiasts” who rejected traditional learning and humanistic scholarship. He was no different

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁴⁸ Casaubon, “On Learning”, p. 22, in Spiller, *Casaubon* p. 203.

⁴⁹ *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*, 1656 ed., pp. 102-106. Casaubon referred to Joseph Acosta, *De Temporibus Novissimis* (Rome, 1590), Lib. II, Cap. XI, pp. 54-56. Acosta brought that example in the context of discussing the diabolical *pride* which led certain people to claim that they were the Messiah or God. Although the theme of pride was also emphasized by Casaubon, Acosta’s approach was clearly more moral and theological, giving the story a demonological explanation, whereas Casaubon tended to give a medical interpretation to such presumptions. Even Acosta, however, referred to that priest several times as insane (*insanus*).

⁵⁰ Casaubon, “On Learning”, p. 25, in Spiller, *Casaubon* p. 206.

from the alchemists, Paracelsians and mystics who came out against the scholastic curriculum in the universities, and indeed was mentioned together with Fludd and Paracelsus, not just by Casaubon but by a radical like John Webster in his *Academiarum Examen*⁵¹. Casaubon similarly coupled Descartes with the more moderate advocates of the reform of learning, Samuel Hartlib and John Dury⁵². From his perspective, all critics of traditional learning and traditional institutions of learning were “enthusiasts”.

Beyond the rejection of social and intellectual norms, Cartesianism was a pathological phenomenon, an expression of delusion and mental sickness. It was similar to melancholy in its oscillation between deep despair and the heights of unlimited confidence. Indeed, such oscillation was also the technique used by Descartes himself to gain disciples, a technique which Casaubon compared to that of the “Jesuited Puritans” – Catholics who allegedly assumed the guise of Puritans and radical sectarians in England:

first to cast them downe to the lowest pitt of despaire, and then, with such engines of persuasion they are commonly well stored with, to rayse them up againe to the highest pitche of confidence; but soe that they leave themselves a power still to cast downe and to raise againe, when they see cause; which must needs oblige the credulous disciple, as he hath found the horror of the one, and the comfort (whether reall or imaginarie) of the other, to a great dependencie. Soe Descartes, after he hath obliged his disciples, to forgett and forgoe all former praecognitions and progresses of eyther senses or sciences, then he thinks he hath them sure; they must adheare to him tooth and nayle, or acknowledge themselves to have beene fooled, which of all things in the worlde (though nothing more ordinarie in the world) with most men is of hardest digestion⁵³.

The Cartesian method of attaining certainty via the stage of radical doubt was thus seen by critics like Casaubon in pathological terms. Forsaking the trodden path of patient accumulative human learning with the hope of attaining quick and absolute truth meant running the risk of insanity.

A few years later, similar epistemological arguments, and the same comparison between Descartes and the Quakers, were made by the Dutch theologian Desmarets (Maresius). Confuting the Cartesian radical separation of soul from body, a separation which denied any spatial location for spirits, and arguing that such a view contradicted both Scripture and common sense, Maresius proceeded to ask:

⁵¹ See above, note 11.

⁵² “On Learning”, p. 35, in Spiller, *Casaubon* pp. 213-214.

⁵³ “On Learning”, p. 24, in Spiller, *Casaubon*, p. 205. Spiller points (*ibid.*, p. 216, Note 18) to a similar passage concerning the Puritans and Jesuits in Casaubon’s *Of Credulity and Incredulity*, Part II (1670), p. 151.

What would indeed these men respond to that? Would they take refuge in their clear and distinct ideas which they claim to have as internal divine revelations (for so in fact they speak), and thus make them equal to the Holy Scriptures? Yet this would introduce Quakerism into Philosophy and they would insolently turn back from the principles of Descartes himself, who acknowledged that even the most active light of reason gives way to the certainty of divine revelation⁵⁴.

Desmarets was criticizing here the epistemological claims of the Cartesians (though not of Descartes himself) to have clear and distinct ideas as if by internal divine revelation, thus competing with Scripture itself. Such claims amounted to the introduction of Quakerism in Philosophy. Although he did not use the label "enthusiasm" itself, Desmarets clearly regarded Cartesian epistemology as dangerously close to what Casaubon had called "philosophical enthusiasm". Indeed, a major thrust of the critique of Descartes by Desmarets and his students was directed at the Cartesian claims to human infallibility, claims which the Calvinist Desmarets found incompatible with the fallen nature of man.

Similar arguments were made by French Catholic critics in the same years. Thus, the Aristotelian physician Pierre Petit stressed the individualistic, authoritarian and innovative character of Cartesian philosophy, although he did not use the term "enthusiast" explicitly. He compared Descartes to Paracelsus, Campanella, Van Helmont and other pretentious innovators, and asked ironically:

What then? how to explain the reputation of Descartes? Why does he have so many (people) dedicated to him? Why do we continue to believe in this venture without any reason? Why do we embrace his opinions as certain dogmas and oracles? Why do we approach his books only with the utmost reverence as if they were sacred records? Why do we venerate and preserve them as if they were the shield or the statue of Pallas (Minerva) fallen from heaven? Should not rather this novelty and ambition render him suspicious to us, who holds a view which is always contrary to the highest authorities whom on this account all scholars throughout the ages have set forth to themselves as examples and guides in philosophizing⁵⁵?

⁵⁴ "Quid vero ad id ista respondent isti homines? An confugient ad suas claras et distinctas perceptiones, quas volunt haberi pro internis revelationibus Divinis (ita enim loquuntur) et sic aequari Sacris Scripturis? Sed hoc foret Quakerismum Philosophicum introducere insolenterque recedere a principiis ipsius Cartesii, qui agnoscebat vel ex acutissimum rationis lumen infra revelationis Divinae certitudinem subsidere". Samuel Desmarets, *De abusu Philosophiae Cartesianae in rebus theologicis et fidei* (Groningen, 1670), p. 77. This text was written mainly against his former disciple Ch. Wittich who attempted to introduce Cartesianism into theology. See P. Dibon, "Notes bibliographiques sur les Cartésiens hollandais", in *Descartes et le cartésianisme hollandais* (Paris & Amsterdam, 1950), pp. 287-288.

⁵⁵ "Quid igitur? quia Cartesius famam, quia multos sibi deditos habet, continuo hunc

The ironic comparison of Descartes's work not only to the saying of the Oracle, but also to the venerated shield or statute of Pallas fallen from the sky, is highly significant. It raises the association of enthusiasm even if Petit did not use the term itself. According to Petit, Descartes's ambition and claim to novelty should arouse our *suspicion* rather than our admiration.

A few years later, the Jesuit father René Rapin made a similar point⁵⁶. Descartes's claims to innovation, coupled with his authoritarianism, put him in line with dubious and extravagant philosophers such as Cardan and Paracelsus:

there are Men of dark, perplex'd Ideas, and of a Genius obscurely profound, who are yet revered as Oracles, and acquire a Sort of an Empire over Mens Judgments, only because they are more peremptory and confident in their Determinations, and owe all their Authority to their Presumption. 'Twas by this means *Paracelsus* advanc'd his Credit in the last Age: He recommended himself by an Affectation of being obscure . . . His Boldness in setting up for a Master, engaged some to be his Scholars, and his Doctrine met with those that embrac'd it, as propos'd under the surprizing Air of a mighty secret ("sous un air de mystère"). *Descartes* ow'd his Reputation to the like Measures . . . This is an Art by which that Author never fails to take, because 'tis by this he plays the Oracle⁵⁷.

Though he did not use the term "enthusiasm" explicitly, Rapin accused Descartes both of being too sceptical and of pretending to be an Oracle⁵⁸.

extra omnem ingenii aleam credemus? Ejus opiniones pro certis dogmatibus atque oraculis amplectemur? Libros velut sacra monumenta non nisi summa cum religione adibimus? tanquam delapsa caelo ancilia aut Palladium quoddam venerabimur ac custodiemus? Ac non potius hunc nobis novitas et ambitio suspectum reddet, quod viam semper contrariam tenuit summis auctoribus, quos ab hinc tot saeculis Eruditi omnes sibi philosophandi duces atque exempla proponunt?" Pierre Petit, *De Nova R. Cartesii Philosophia Dissertationes* (Paris, 1670), p. 2. On the physician Pierre Petit (1617-1687) – who should not be confused with the mathematician and friend of Pascal by the same name – see *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, xxxix. 710-711.

⁵⁶ Le P. Rapin, *Réflexions sur la philosophie ancienne et moderne, et sur l'usage qu'on doit faire pour la religion*, sections xvii-xxvi (Paris, 1676; subsequent editions in Rapin's *Oeuvres* in Amsterdam, 1709, and in 1725). For an English translation see *The Whole Critical Works of Mons. Rapin, newly done into English by Several hands* (London, 1706, 3rd ed., 1731), ii. 377-395. On Rapin see, *Nouvelle Biographie Universelle*, xli. 650-653 and Bayle's article "Rapin, René" in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969; reprint of the Paris ed., 1820-1824, xii. 470-474). Bayle did not refer, however, to Rapin's polemic with Descartes.

⁵⁷ Rapin, *Reflections upon Philosophy in General*, in *The Whole Critical Works*, ii. 394. For the French text, see pp. 379-380 of the 1709 or 1725 edition mentioned in the previous note.

⁵⁸ On the accusation of scepticism, see section xviii, p. 381 in the 1706 English edition. The term "enthusiast" appears in fact in the English translation of Rapin in reference to the emperor Julian who is characterized as "The wildest Enthusiast" (in French, "Le plus visionnaire de tous") and in reference to Cardan's claim to have had communication

A similar type of critique we find twenty years later coming from the satirical pen of the Jesuit Gabriel Daniel. Like the Calvinist Desmarets, Daniel criticized the radical Cartesian separation of soul from body, indeed, his whole satire was based on that point. Like Casaubon, Daniel saw the Cartesians as Platonists in their stress on contemplative philosophy. In fact, he had Descartes's old friend say, "*M. Descartes* had often Fits of Extasy"⁵⁹. More importantly, according to Father Daniel's satire, Descartes received the crucial secret of separating his soul from his body by an extraordinary revelation from God⁶⁰. In the same vein, Father Daniel had Aristotle ask Descartes's disciples how Descartes knew that God did not deceive him, and that what he conceived distinctly was indeed true – "Hath God revealed it to him?"⁶¹ For the Jesuit Daniel as for the Anglican Casaubon and the Reformed theologians Voet, Schoock, and Desmarets, Cartesian epistemology necessarily implied a claim to some divine inspiration, that is, some type of "enthusiasm"⁶². With Casaubon and Rapin, Father Daniel also criticized the authoritarian character of Cartesian epistemology. He was particularly ironic concerning Descartes's claims to infallible authority, given Descartes's own revolt against the authority of Aristotle⁶³.

The epistemological issue was dealt with much more extensively and explicitly by John Sergeant a few years later. Indeed, this was the core of his debate with the Cartesian Antoine Le Grand. Sergeant attacked "The Whole way of Ideas" characteristic of Cartesian philosophy. Referring to Descartes's first rule of method, he said:

in Dreams with his Spirit, a claim which "has still more of the Enthusiast, or the Mad-man". (In French the phrase is "est encore plus extravagant".) See pp. 378, 386, and in the French edition, pp. 343, 350.

⁵⁹ Gabriel Daniel, *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius*, p. 14 and p. 54 for the reference to the Cartesians as Platonists.

⁶⁰ "So far *M. Descartes* took Reason along with him for his Guide; and for ought I know he might have stop'd there, had not Fortune, or rather the good Providence of God . . . reveal'd to him in an extraordinary manner the Secret that he was in search of". *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶² One final sentence is worth quoting from a later text of Father Daniel, *Nouvelles Difficultés proposées à l'auteur du Voyage de Monde de Descartes* (first published in 1693; see also the 1720 edition of the *Voyage*). There he has one of the protagonists say to the Cartesian: "Je veux, et de tout mon coeur, estre Cartésien. Aidez-moy à cela. Communiquez-moy vos lumières, ou celles que vous recevez de Monsieur Descartes . . . Il m'est fort indifférent que vous les produisiez du fond de vostre esprit, ou que vous me parliez en homme inspiré". *Ibid.*, p. 3. On the anti-contemplative and empirical orientation of the Jesuits, including Father Daniel, and on their objections to the radical separation between body and soul, see also Bouiller, *Histoire de la philosophie cartésienne*, Vol. I, Ch. XXVII.

⁶³ *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius*, pp. 6-7.

... this is the main Hinge of all the *Cartesian* Hypothesis, which persuades them to place the *Ground of Truth* within their *own Minds*, and its *Productions*; and not in the *Things themselves*⁶⁴.

The Cartesian rule of evidence meant a reliance on *subjective* reason, on private reason which was completely severed from the outward world. Such a procedure had obvious *psychological* implications as well. Looking at the 1619 dreams – as indeed Baillet had done – from the perspective of Descartes's method (published almost twenty years later), Sergeant saw them as the result of Descartes's attempt to free himself from dependence on the senses. In his *Non Ultra* of 1698, Sergeant noted that the attempt to free oneself from knowledge transmitted by the senses "had confessedly lost *Cartesius* his wits for some time"⁶⁵. Although in 1698-1699, in response to Le Grand's protests, Sergeant tended to restrict his accusation, denying the claim that Descartes was *habitually* a fanatic, his earlier *Method to Science* clearly implied that Cartesian epistemology in general savoured of "enthusiasm"⁶⁶. It is a passage worth quoting in full:

Having thus got rid of the Senses giving us notice of *outward* things, by imprinting Notions in them, which Experience teaches us is the *ordinary* way of knowing any thing, it follows of course, that they must recurr to *Extraordinary* ways by *Inward* means, or to *Inward Light*; which is the method of Fanaticks in Religion, when they have rejected the *ordinary* ways of believing their proper Teachers. And, hence, the *Cartesians* tell us, they know there is a *God*, by the Divine Idea of himself which he has imprinted in them; which is in other Terms to say, that they have it by *Divine Revelation*; for Knowledge, according to them, being caus'd in them by those *Ideas*, nay, consisting formally in their having the Ideas of things in them; and *God* giving them those *Ideas* without the help of *Second* causes, it follows that *God* is the immediate Cause of all our Knowledge; and, so, no thanks at all to the things in Nature, or to Natural Agents ...⁶⁷.

Sergeant, just like Schoock and Casaubon, identified the *Lumière Naturel* of Descartes with the "Inward Light" of the fanatics. Similarly, while Descartes had recourse to God as a *guarantee* of the correspondence between the ideas or objects in our mind and the external reality, Sergeant took him to mean that God was the direct *source* of all our knowledge. This interpretation was more suitable to the epistemology of Malebranche, according to whom we see all things in God, the ideas we im-

⁶⁴ Sergeant, *Non Ultra*, p. 13.

⁶⁵ Sergeant, *Non Ultra*, p. 109, and see also above, section I, for the quotation from Sergeant's *Raillery defeated by Cold Reason* which was published the following year.

⁶⁶ John Sergeant, *The Method to Science* (London, 1696).

⁶⁷ Sergeant, *The Method to Science*, Preface, p. C 6 verso.

mediately perceive are to be identified with the ideas that God used in creating the world. And indeed, Sergeant relied heavily on Malebranche in his criticism of Cartesianism:

It may seem harsh that I should resemble tho' (*sic!*) *Cartesian* method to *Fanaticism*, or pretend they bring a kind of *Enthusiasm* into Philosophy. Let the so much applauded *Malebranche* be my Compurgator. That very Ingenious and Eloquent Person, who has a peculiar Talent of talking Nonsense as prettily and plausibly as any Man I ever read . . . ⁶⁸.

According to Malebranche, Sergeant continues

Those that *hear* us do not *learn* the Truths we speak to their *Ears*, unless he that discover'd them to us (he *means* GOD the *Giver* of Ideas) do *reveal* them at the same time to the *Mind*. So that all science it *seems*, comes by Divine Revelation . . . Was ever such Quakerism heard of among Philosophers! Or, plain honest Human Reason so subtilized and exhal'd into Mystick Theology by Spiritual Alchemy! ⁶⁹.

The comparison with Quakerism, Mystical theology and Spiritual Alchemy needs no further comment. For Sergeant, Malebranche only made explicit the enthusiastic character of Cartesian philosophy.

By contrast, Sergeant presented his own, essentially Aristotelian epistemology as a rational one, that of "calm reason". Like earlier critics of Descartes, Sergeant stressed the close links between Reason and the senses, and the fact that our mind simply reflected the objects existing in the external world. Cognition should be grounded in the nature of things, and Aristotelian epistemology and Logic, Sergeant believed, ensures that grounding:

I am not conscious to my self, that I have any thing in my Method but what is entirely built on the Nature of the thing in hand; I mean, Notions, Propositions, and Rational Discourses, found in the Minds of all Mankind; which way of Building on the Nature of the Subject of which we are speaking, is the only Ground that can give solidity to any Discourse ⁷⁰.

The Aristotelian method was thus not only based on external reality, it was also a *universal* and *public* method to science. Since "the first Rule of our knowledge of all Truths whatever must be *common* to *all* Knowing Natures in the World" ⁷¹. While Descartes clearly believed that his own method was such, common to all knowing subjects, his critics denied that, seeing his method as subjective, private and "enthusiastic". In-

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. C 8 recto.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. d verso – d 1 recto. A similar argument was made a generation earlier by Desmarets as we have seen above.

⁷⁰ *Non Ultra*, p. 11-12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

deed, its productions could well be a matter of fancy. The only guarantee against such danger was to guide our thoughts and judge them by their conformity to *things* in *Nature*, and not vice versa –

since we are sure Creative Wisdom made *them*, and implanted Truth *in them*, whereas 'tis *Uncertain* whether *God* or our whimsical Fancies gave us our *ideas*: and 'tis certain they are the off-spring of the latter, if they be not conformable to the Things without us⁷².

For Sergeant, a realistic epistemology of the Aristotelian type, where Reason was based on sense data, was the only universal epistemology, the only one which avoided the dangers of subjective fancy and enthusiasm, and which thus could serve as the basis of the public social order⁷³. Cartesian epistemology by contrast, especially as it was developed by Malebranche, meant that we received our truths by divine revelation. Once again, the subversive social implications of such an epistemology were clearly stated:

To what end then are Teachers, Professors, Schools and Universities, if, when we have done what we can by all our Teaching and Learning, nothing but Divine Revelation must do the business, or gain us any science⁷⁴.

Vis-à-vis Cartesian epistemology and the Cartesian conception of Reason, conservative critics posited either an Aristotelian epistemology or a humanistic view of Reason in terms of human learning. It may be worthwhile to conclude this subject with a reference to Swift's *Tale of a Tub* which for all its irony encapsulated the humanistic conception of Reason versus the Cartesian view which was regarded as "enthusiastic", indeed, as mad:

For, the Brain, in its natural Position and State of Serenity, disposeth its Owner to pass his Life in the common Forms, without any Thought of subduing Multitudes to his own *Power*, his *Reasons* or his *Visions*; and the more he shapes his Understanding by the Pattern of Human Learning, the less he is inclined to form Parties after his particular Notions; because that instructs him in his private Infirmities, as well as in the stubborn Ignorance of the People. But when a Man's Fancy gets *astride* on his Reason, when

⁷² *The Method to Science*, Preface, p. C 8 verso.

⁷³ Sergeant also criticized Locke's theory of knowledge, though much less sharply than he did that of Descartes. In fact, Locke, like Sergeant, tried to counter the Cartesian epistemology based on "innate ideas" which seemed to him too subjective, and to offer instead a *public* epistemology, quite different, of course, from that of Sergeant. On the development of English theories of knowledge in the Restoration period, from the Cambridge Platonists to Locke, focusing, among other things, on the debate with the enthusiasts, there is an interesting unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by Craig Diamond, "Public Identity in Restoration England: From Prophetic to Economic" (Johns Hopkins University, 1982).

⁷⁴ Sergeant, *The Method to Science*, Preface, p. d.

Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and common Understanding, as well as common Sense, is Kickt out of Doors; the first Proselyte he makes, is Himself, and when that is once compass'd, the Difficulty is not so great in bringing over others; A strong Delusion always operating from *without*, as vigorously as from *within*⁷⁵.

For Swift, as for Casaubon, human *understanding* should be shaped by human *learning*. The attempts of individual innovators and revolutionaries like Descartes to free themselves from this tradition, or more precisely, to subdue it to their own powers, visions, and alleged "Reason" meant that they had in fact *forsaken* Reason and let fancy, imagination and delusion overcome them. Such an attitude had obvious social and psychological implications as well:

Cartesius reckoned to see before he died, the Sentiments of all Philosophers, like so many lesser Stars in his *Romantick* System, rapt and drawn within his own *Vortex*⁷⁶.

Swift was in all probability influenced directly by both Casaubon and Sergeant⁷⁷. Like Casaubon, he saw Descartes, together with other innovators in philosophy as mentally sick in his incredible egocentric pretensions:

For, what Man in the natural State, or Course of Thinking, did ever conceive it in his Power, to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, and Breadth, and Height of his own?⁷⁸

The accusations levelled against Descartes the person which we have surveyed in the first section, had their correlate critique directed at his method and epistemology. While traditional learning was public and had served as the basis of the social order, Descartes's method of *introversion* was completely private, indeed subversive of the social order. This is the significance of terms like "caves" and "darkness" used by Casaubon in his *Treatise on Enthusiasm*⁷⁹. Similarly, by criticizing traditional epistemology, and forsaking the use of the senses, Descartes not only opened the way to scepticism, but in his exclusive reliance on reason and "contemplation", risked becoming an "enthusiast" as well.

⁷⁵ Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, ed. by A.C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (Oxford, 1958), p. 171.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷⁷ Compare the above quotation to Sergeant's very similar expressions in *Non Ultra* referred to by Note 33 above.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166. Like Casaubon, Swift coupled Descartes with Paracelsus to whom he also added Epicurus and Diogenes, all revolutionaries fit for the whips and chains of Bedlam. *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm*, p. 172. See also Spiller, "The Idol of the Stove" (note 27 above).

Descartes's critics thus saw him not just as a "sceptique malgré lui", but as an "enthusiast malgré lui". This dual accusation helps us to appreciate the challenge posed by Cartesian philosophy to traditional learning in the seventeenth century. Whereas Descartes tried to offer a new intellectual basis for the social and cultural order of the time, his critics saw his enterprise as *destructive* rather than *constructive*. No less important, this critique reveals the tacit assumptions on which the traditional cultural order was founded. Epistemologically, it was based on a combination of sense perceptions and reason. Socially, it relied on tradition, on the classical authorities, as well as on established institutions such as the universities. Psychologically, such a cultural order required self-restraint, humility, and participation in a public discourse. Theologically, it involved the acceptance of Scripture and ecclesiastical authority, rather than the reliance on personal contemplation. Intellectuals like Descartes and his disciples, who seemed to reject these assumptions, were accused not only of scepticism, but of "enthusiasm" as well.

REFLECTIONS ON THE OTHER-MINDS PROBLEM: DESCARTES AND OTHERS

ALAN GABBEY

The problem of “other minds” does not enjoy a clearly signposted account of its origins and historical development. As Henze rightly remarks, “the origins of the other-minds problem are obscure, and a great service would be rendered by anyone who tracked them down”. Present-day discussions of the problem corroborate Henze’s point. In his “Other Minds” article *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, J.M. Shorter refers to “the traditional and most obvious solution to it, the argument from analogy”, but does not identify anyone who advanced that solution, and he discusses the alternative views of no one earlier than Wittgenstein. Matthews provisionally finds the problem in St. Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, only to shy away in the end from his find, while Chastaing finds it in the third *Epistola* of St. Faustus of Riez (fifth century), long before its re-emergence post-Descartes in an explicit form in the writings of the Abbé Lanion, Cordemoy, Régis and Arnauld. Because Descartes is the pivotal figure in the history of the philosophy of mind, one supposes, Chastaing, Henze and Copleston feel that Descartes *ought* to have addressed the problem formally in his published writings, especially the *Meditationes*. The author of the other-minds entry in the *Pan Dictionary of Philosophy* even imagines that the problem “should have been *discovered* by Descartes” (my italics)¹.

This dappled historiography derives to an important degree from a failure in some authors to recognize fully two distinct though related problems or to appreciate their differing historical meanings: (A) the *existence* of other minds or souls, which is the principal issue in the other-minds problem as generally understood today; and (B) the *nature* of other minds, already presumed to exist, and my acquaintance with their *con-*

¹ Donald Henze, “Descartes on Other Minds”, in *Studies in the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Nicholas Rescher (Oxford, Blackwell, 1972) (American Philosophical Quarterly Monograph Series, No. 6), pp. 41-56; *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York, 1967), vi. 7-13; Gareth Matthews, “Descartes and the Problem of Other Minds”, in *Essays on Descartes’ Meditations*, ed. A.O. Rorty (1986), pp. 141-151; Maxime Chastaing, “Descartes, Fauste de Riez et le problème de la connaissance d’autrui”, in *Etiennne Gilson, philosophe de la Chrétienté*, ed. J. Maritain, et al. (Paris, 1949), pp. 187-211; F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York, 1962-1967), iv. 126; *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Jennifer Speake (London, 1979), pp. 241-242.

tents. To ask if and how far the contents or workings of my neighbor's conscious mind resemble those of my own is not the same as asking if my neighbor has a mind at all, though answering either question is obviously one way of approaching the other. Correspondingly, the histories of Problems A and B, though clearly interdependent, are not congruent.

In Book VIII of *De Trinitate* both problems appear, but St. Augustine's main concern is with Problem B, with Problem A emerging only in that context and in (so to speak) a supporting role. Naturally, St. Augustine does not emphasize the distinction between the two problems, which in itself indicates that it is misleading and anachronistic to read into his words a post-Cartesian appreciation of the other-minds problem as a distinct philosophical problem. The key passage reads as follows:

... Nam et motus corporum, quibus praeter nos alios vivere sentimus, ex nostra similitudine agnoscimus: quia et nos ita movemus corpus vivendo, sicut illa corpora moveri advertimus. Neque enim cum corpus vivum movetur, aperitur ulla via oculis nostris ad videndum animum, rem quae oculis videri non potest: sed illi moli aliquid inesse sentimus quale nobis inest ad movendum similiter molem nostram, quod est vita et anima. Neque quasi humanae prudentiae rationisque proprium est. Et bestiae quippe sentiunt vivere, non tantum se ipsas, sed etiam se invicem atque alterutrum, et nos ipsos. Nec animas nostras vident, sed ex motibus corporis, idque statim et facillime quadam conspiratione naturali. Animum igitur cunjuslibet et ex nostro novimus, et ex nostro credimus quem non novimus. Non enim tantum sentimus animum, sed etiam scire possumus quid sit animus consideratione nostri: habemus enim animum².

The argument from analogy validates my belief that others besides myself, while they are alive and move, have within them a living soul. Yet St. Augustine's ultimate concern is to establish, on the same analogical grounds, that we know what others' souls are like, what kind of thing they are, not merely that each of us has one (cf. the last sentence of the passage). The context of the passage is a discussion (beginning in ch. 5) of why we love the Apostle Paul – not because of his human form, since he is no longer a man, but a living soul separated from the body. So it is his just soul (*animus justus*) that we love, and by what rule, whether general or particular, can this be so, “nisi quia scimus et quid sit animus, et quid sit justus?” And we know what a soul is, because each of us possesses one:

Neque enim unquam oculis vidimus, et ex similitudine visorum plurimum notionem generalem specialemve percepimus; sed potius, ut dixi, quia et nos habemus. Quid enim tam intime scitur, seque ipsum esse sentit; quam

² *De Trinitate*, lib. viii, ch. VI: *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 42 (1841), col. 953-954.

id quo etiam caetera sentiuntur, id est, ipse animus? Nam et motus corporum . . .³.

It is not the ontological status of Paul's or any other soul that is the primary issue, but the nature of his or another soul as an object of my acquaintance. Simply resting in the knowledge that Paul has a soul would not have served Augustine's purpose, since he introduced our love of the Apostle as an instructive comparison to elucidate our understanding and love of the Trinity. We seek understanding of "Trinitatis aeternitas, et aequalitas, et unitas", but beliefs must precede understanding, and what we believe of the Trinity must not be grounded in falsehood:

. . . quomodo igitur eam Trinitatem quam non novimus, credendo diligimus? An secundum specialem generalemve notitiam, secundum quam diligimus apostolum Paulum? Qui etiam si non ea facie fuit quae nobis occurrit de illo cogitantibus, et hoc penitus ignoramus, novimus tamen quid sit homo. Ut enim longe non eamus, hoc sumus: et illum hoc fuisse, et animam ejus corpori copulatam mortaliter vixisse manifestum est. Hoc ergo de illo credimus, quod invenimus in nobis, juxta speciem vel genus, quo humana omnis natura pariter continetur . . .⁴.

St. Faustus's *Epistola* III, addressed to an unidentified "reverendissimus sacerdos" who had inquired how best to answer Arian heresies, also meets his request for a reply to the question: "Quae in rebus humanis corporea, quaeve incorporea sentienda sint?" Here Faustus's central concern is to ensure that one's conception of the soul does not entail a mingling of God with any of His creatures. There is nothing incorporeal other than God. Souls occupy places, just as bodies do, and if souls were incorporeal, they would not occupy particular places but would fill everything and be present everywhere, and would therefore be part of God. During the course of the argument Faustus broaches the question of whether one soul can participate in the workings of another, other than through internal empathetic representation: ". . . quod nunc inter nos commercia sermonum mutua spiritus actione scimus, loqui me vobiscum, sed apud conscientiam meam sentio; ad vos me accessisse non sentio . . ."⁵. Yet there seems to be nothing in the text to justify Chastaing's claim that St. Faustus actually poses the other-minds problem:

Si je deviens en effet, par ma pensée, l'autre en tant qu'autre, comment

³ *Ibid.*, col. 953.

⁴ *De Trinitate*, lib. viii, ch. V: *ibid.*, col. 952-953.

⁵ *Epistola* III: *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 58 (1862), col. 842 B. For a contemporary Augustinian reply to Faustus, see the philosophically important *De statu animae* (467-472) of Claudius Mamertus (c. 425 - c. 474): *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 53 (1865), col. 693-780.

non seulement différencier ma pensée d'autres pensées, mais encore croire qu'existent d'autres pensées? C'est la question que pose Fauste de Riez aux disciples de saint Augustin qui, cartésiens plusieurs siècles avant Descartes [!], distinguent esprit et étendue⁶.

In making his case against the incorporeality of the soul, St. Faustus employed Problem B, not Problem A.

To move swiftly to Descartes's own century⁷, we find that Malebranche too addressed only Problem B in *De la Recherche de la Vérité* (1st ed. 1674-1675). Chapter VII of Part II of Book III ("De l'Entendement, ou de l'Esprit pur") explicates the "quatre manières de voir les choses", that is, "connoître les choses par elles-mêmes", "par leurs idées", "par conscience, ou par sentiment intérieur", and "par conjecture". As examples corresponding respectively to these four ways of perceiving or knowing, Malebranche discusses how we know God, bodies, our own souls, and fourthly, "comment on connoît l'ame des autres hommes".

Malebranche's concern in the chapter is not to establish the manner of our knowing that specified things exist, but the manner of our knowing *about* such things whatever it is we believe to be true of their natures and properties. Thus "il est nécessaire de dire, que l'on connoît Dieu par lui-même, quoique la connoissance que l'on en a en cette vie soit tres-imparfaite", and as for bodies, "c'est en Dieu, & par leurs idées, que nous voyons les corps avec leurs propriétés; & c'est pour cela que la connoissance que nous en avons est tres-parfaite: je veux dire, que l'idée que nous avons de l'étendue suffit pour nous faire connoître toutes les propriétés, dont l'étendue est capable"⁸. Our knowledge of the souls or minds of others is of course no better than conjectural:

il est manifeste que nous ne les connoissons que par conjecture. Nous ne les connoissons présentement ni en elles-mêmes [les âmes des autres hommes], ni par leurs idées, & comme elles sont différentes de nous, il n'est pas possible que nous les connoissions par conscience. Nous conjecturons que les âmes des autres hommes sont de même espece que la nôtre. Ce que nous sentons en nous-mêmes, nous prétendons qu'ils le sentent; & même lorsque ces sentimens n'ont point de rapport au corps, nous sommes assurez que nous ne nous trompons point: parce que nous voyons en Dieu certaines idées & certaines loix immuables, selon lesquelles nous sçavons avec certitude, que Dieu agit également dans tous les esprits⁹.

⁶ Chastaing, "Descartes", pp. 196-197.

⁷ It would be interesting to know how Problems A and B fared during the intervening centuries. There seems to be no general survey of the topic.

⁸ *Oeuvres de Malebranche*, ed. André Robinet, 22 vols. (Paris, 1958-1984), vol. 1 (ed. Geneviève Rodis-Lewis), pp. 449-450.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 454.

In the definitive modern edition of Malebranche's *oeuvres* there is an editorial note against the first sentence of this passage which implies that the issue there is Problem A: "L'existence d'autrui était touchée par la généralité du doute cartésien . . . mais implicitement rétablie avec l'échec de ce doute Le problème a été dégagé par Cordemoy, *Discours physique de la parole*, Paris, 1668 . . ." ¹⁰. The editorial note is of course informative, but it seems to me to misrepresent in an interesting way the precise purpose of the passage. Here Chastaing's reading of Malebranche is surely the correct one:

Malebranche ne pose donc pas le problème de l'existence de pensées étrangères à la mienne ¹¹, davantage, il le suppose résolu: puisque d'autres êtres pensent, il se demande *ce qu'ils pensent* L'abbé de Lanion, par conséquent, qui veut connaître quel droit il a de penser qu'autrui *existe*, introduit dans le text même de Malebranche, avec le même contexte "critique" que Malebranche, une enquête étrangère à la *Recherche de la Vérité* ¹².

As Chastaing has shown, the Abbé Pierre de Lanion (1644-?) was one of those contemporaries of Malebranche who did enunciate and address Problem A as a distinct philosophical question. The first five of his *Méditations sur la Métaphysique* (Paris, 1678) are largely a re-write of

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 530-531, n. 384.

¹¹ At this point Chastaing notes: "Ce problème se pose si peu pour lui qu'il paraît l'ignorer quand ses adversaires le suggèrent ou l'énoncent. Il ne répond pas à Leibniz lorsque celui-ci, après avoir lu l'abbé de Lanion, écrit: 'Pour ce qui est des esprits autres que nous, il y a démonstration de leur existence[, et il en doit avoir plus qu'on ne pense continues the text but omitted by Chastaing]' (Gerhardt, I, 330). Il ne répond pas à Arnauld, dont le vingt-cinquième chapitre critique la connaissance conjecturale d'autrui. Et, à Regis qui lui parle des autres âmes, il répond en parlant de son âme . . ." (first article cited in next note, pp. 237-238, n. 6). The Leibniz letter is that to Malebranche of 22 June 1679, and was written under the impression that Malebranche was the author of Lanion's *Méditations sur la Métaphysique*, which had appeared under the pseudonym Guillaume Wander. Malebranche set Leibniz right on the matter in his letter of 31 July 1679, but as Chastaing points out, he said nothing about the fact that Leibniz had Problem A in mind. In his brief remark on the problem, Leibniz claims that the existence of other-minds can be "demonstrated", but as far as I can tell no such demonstration appears in his published writings. The twenty-fifth chapter of Arnauld to which Chastaing refers is that of *Des vraies et des fausses idées, contre ce qu'enseigne l'auteur de la Recherche de la Vérité* (Cologne, 1683), in which Arnauld asks: "Si nous connoissons sans Idée les ames des autres hommes?": *Oeuvres de Messire Antoine Arnauld, Docteur de la Maison et Société de Sorbonne* (Paris, 1775-1783) xxxviii. 331-332. Arnauld does have Problem A in mind, but raises it only in passing in reply to Malebranche's argument that we *know* other men's souls only "par conjecture".

¹² Maxime Chastaing, "L'abbé de Lanion et le problème cartésien de la connaissance d'autrui", *Revue philosophique*, cxli (1951), 228-248: pp. 237-238. For other studies on the other-minds problem by Chastaing, see his *L'existence d'autrui* (Paris, 1951), and "Le 'Traité' de l'abbé Macy et la 'vieille réponse' cartésienne au problème de la connaissance d'autrui", *Revue philosophique*, cxliii (1953), 76-84. Note that his 1951 monograph is largely non-historical.

Descartes's *Meditationes*, but his sixth is devoted to our knowledge of the existence of bodies, and the seventh to the existence of other minds. And as if to underline the point just made about Malebranche, his discussion of Problem A emerges during his commentary on Malebranche's "quatre manières de connoître les choses". Indeed the discussion is conducted in terms of the four ways, the crucial difference from Malebranche being the shifted sense of "connoître" assumed by Lanion. We "know others", that is we know their existence, not "par conscience", nor "par eux-mêmes" or "par aucune idée". It is only "par conjecture que je puis juger qu'il *existe* des esprits hors de moi" (my italics)¹³.

I do not know precisely Descartes's role in the transformation typified by the shift from Malebranche's Problem B to Lanion's Problem A. The evidence indicates that before Descartes, Problem A was either not recognized as such, or (as for Augustine) introduced as an ancillary to some form of Problem B, and that after Descartes, Problem A came to be recognized as a distinct philosophical issue, without Problem B thereby losing any of its philosophical interest. If this hypothesis is correct, however, it is still difficult to determine whether the change was due directly to the special character of Descartes's philosophy of mind, or to some broader feature of the philosophical complexion of the time. My feeling is that the status of Problem A as an independent issue was made possible – perhaps could only have been made possible – by the appearance of a philosophical doctrine according to which every living organism is a machine, with the human body being the only machine in which a rational soul enjoys tenancy.

Whatever the full picture might turn out to be, it is certain that Descartes himself did not address Problem A in those of his published writings where we might have expected it: the *Meditationes*, *Principia Philosophiae*, or *Les Passions de l'Ame*. The existence of other minds is one of the *opiniones* that is subjected to doubt in *Meditatio* II, but once the *cogito* argument has been completed and God's existence demonstrated, other minds are implicitly present once again in the subsequently reconstructed divinely grounded world.

On the other hand, in Part V of the *Discours de la Méthode* the other-minds problem is addressed, though not directly in the manner of Lanion or Cordemoy, nor on reading the passage does one feel that for Descartes the problem is a specific philosophical difficulty meriting independent

¹³ Chastaing, "L'abbé de Lanion", pp. 236-237. Since I was not able to consult Lanion's *Méditations* during the preparation of this paper, I am relying on Chastaing's account.

treatment. In the passage on his promised but unpublished *Traité de l'Homme*, Descartes notes that if perchance a machine could be made to resemble in all respects some animal, a monkey say, then there would be *no* criteria by which we would know that it was not a natural monkey. However, if machines could be made to look like human beings, “& imitassent autant nos actions que moralement il seroit possible”, then there would in fact be *two* criteria by which we would know they were not real human beings. First, such apparent human beings would not use language with the spontaneity observed in real human beings. They might respond with words under stimuli, but they could never initiate a conversation, or comment on what others say in their presence. As for the second criterion for spotting such pseudo-human machines,

bien qu'elles fissent plusieurs choses aussy bien, ou peustestre mieux qu'aucun de nous, elles manqueroient infalliblement en quelques autres, par lesquelles on découvroiroit qu'elles n'agiroyent pas par connoissance, mais seulement par la disposition de leurs organes. Car, au lieu que la raison est un instrument universel, qui peut servir en toutes sortes de rencontres, ces organes ont besoin de quelque particuliere disposition pour chaque action particuliere; d'où vient qu'il est moralement impossible qu'il y en ait assez de divers en une machine, pour la faire agir en toutes les occurrences de la vie, de mesme façon que nostre raison nous fait agir¹⁴.

In this uncharacteristically enigmatic passage, Descartes seems to be thinking of the inability of machines to perform tasks lying outside the range of activities for which they were created and for which their “organs” were designed. Endowed with rational minds, on the other hand, machines of appropriate construction – that is, really human machines – would exhibit intentionality and flexibility of willed action in handling unexpected situations¹⁵. However, Descartes is surely on dangerous ground in claiming that it is “*moralement impossible*” for there to be enough “*particulières dispositions*” in the organs of pseudo-human machines to allow them to act as real humans do in all real-life situations. That seems to imply that he would allow the “*in-principle*” possibility of constructing highly advanced machines that would be indistinguishable from real humans, and it is not clear that the language criterion would necessarily catch out such creatures, since it is not clear if language ability is among the “*plusieurs choses*” in which the creatures “*manqueroient infalliblement*”. Presumably language ability is something apart, in which case the language criterion is the only one Descartes really needs

¹⁴ *Oeuvres de Descartes, publiées par Charles Adam & Paul Tannery, Nouvelle Présentation, en co-édition avec le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, eds. P. Costabel, J. Beaudé and B. Rochot (Paris, 1964-1974), vi. 57. Hereafter I shall refer to this edition as AT(NP).

¹⁵ Cf. Geneviève Rodis-Lewis, *L'individualité selon Descartes* (Paris, 1950), pp. 113-114.

to distinguish between real humans and machines, however highly developed¹⁶.

At all events, his purpose in setting out the two criteria in Part V is not to demonstrate that other humans have minds, or even to ask the question that interested Cordemoy and Lanion. His purpose is to show how we can be sure that a given human look-alike does *not* have a mind, and as he goes on to argue in the remainder of Part V, the same two criteria enable us to understand the distinction between humans and animals. Apart from the pre-*cogito* aporetics in *Meditatio* II, Descartes was never in any doubt whatever about the existence of other minds. As Van de Pitte has maintained, this is a telling point against the view, advanced by Henze and others, that Descartes employed the analogy argument in his thinking about other minds, since for Descartes inferences from analogy yield only probable (or at least morally certain) knowledge¹⁷.

It is important to note that this certainty about the existence of other minds was not shaken by the fact that the language argument does not work for babies. Henry More made this point nicely in his letter to Descartes of 5 March 1649. In his first letter (11 December 1648), More had raised objections against Descartes's claim that animals do not possess souls. In his reply, 21 February 1649, Descartes had used the language argument, noting:

Haec enim loquela unicum est cogitationis in corpore latentis signum certum, atque ipsâ utuntur omnes homines, etiam quam maximè stupidi & mente capti, & linguâ vocisque organis destituti, non autem ullum brutum; eamque idcirco pro verâ inter homines & bruta differentiâ sumere licet¹⁸.

¹⁶ Matthews, "Descartes", argues that the language argument (or at least his interpretation of Descartes's language argument) is indeed the best Descartes has to hand.

¹⁷ Frederick P. Van de Pitte, "Descartes on analogy and other minds", *International Studies in Philosophy*, vii (1975), 89-110. Van de Pitte gives good accounts of the views of Malebranche, Cordemoy, Arnauld and Lanion, and notes in particular that Cordemoy's *Discours physique de la parole* (Paris, 1668) "is apparently the first overt and explicit treatment of other minds in the history of philosophy" (p. 97). Van de Pitte's reading of Descartes' position is that the existence of other minds is a necessary deduction from the fact that God is not a deceiver. If God had created an entity that looked and behaved like a human being, then "this would constitute a deception - i.e., God would have created a context in which no amount of caution on our part could prevent us from falling into error Therefore . . . what appears to be a human being must be one". Furthermore, "this epistemological guarantee is backed up by an ontological assurance Because of his perfection and simplicity, God cannot choose to create disorder, nor can he violate the given order once he has 'decided' what it will be" (p. 105). But surely our caution need extend only as far as applying the language criterion to sort out the humans from the humanoids, in which case God would not be deceiving us, no more than he does when we see a mirage in the desert, where there are physical criteria that enable us to escape from error.

¹⁸ AT(NP), v. 243-245, 278.

To which More retorts, referring to the phrase “quam maxime stupidi & mente capti . . . non autem ullum brutum”:

Nec infantes ulli, per aliquàm multa saltem mensium spatia, quamvis plorent, rideant, irascantur &c. Nec diffidis tamen, opinor, quin infantes sint animati, animamque habeant cogitantem¹⁹.

Descartes's answer to that side-steps the difficulty, yet at the same time it leads us in a new direction in the quest for the grounds of his certainty on the existence of other minds:

Dispar est ratio infantum & brutorum: nec judicarem infantes esse mente praeditos, nisi viderem eos esse eiusdem naturae cum adultis; bruta autem eousque nunquam adolescunt, ut aliqua in iis cogitationis nota certa deprehendatur²⁰.

What does he mean by “eiusdem naturae cum adultis”? Clearly, the sense of *natura* here is not that of defining essence (“man a rational animal”), since at least we can take it that Descartes is not committing an elementary petition of principle. More promising is the second alternative definition of *natura* in *Meditatio VI*:

per naturam enim, generaliter spectatam, nihil nunc aliud quam vel Deum ipsum, vel rerum creaturarum coordinationem a Deo institutam intelligo; nec aliud per naturam meam in particulari, quam complexionem eorum omnium quae mihi a Deo sunt tributa²¹.

The application of this definition to the passage from the More letter threatens another *petitio principii*, but only if we ignore how Descartes could come to know that the possession of a rational soul is something God has decreed for the *complexio* that constitutes each human being. There are two reasons that ground this knowledge, the first depending ultimately on the second. First, the divinely appointed human *complexio* is transmitted through, and ensured as a natural consequence of, being born of human parents. Here the original sense of *natura* comes to the fore. As the Coimbran commentators on the *Physics* note in the last of the six senses of *natura* they select to convey “de multiplici naturae significato”:

Denique, ut reliquas ejusdem vocabuli notiones, quae multo plures sunt omittamus, accipitur natura pro viventium generatione, quae nativitas vocatur; atque haec est prima et germana tam apud Latinos quam Graecos hujus vocis significatio²².

¹⁹ More to Descartes, 5 March 1649: *ibid.*, p. 311.

²⁰ Descartes to More, 15 April 1649: *ibid.*, p. 345.

²¹ AT(NP), vii. 80.

²² Etienne Gilson, *Index Scolastico-Cartésien* (2nd ed., Paris, 1979), p. 198.

If babies not yet at the stage of speech possess minds because they are “eiusdem naturae cum adultis”, that in turn is because of the continuing propagation of the human species, to which God gave rational souls at the beginning, and for each member of which He continues to provide a soul to lodge in and govern the body. In Descartes’s view, the soul is not propagated from the souls of the parents, as the foetal elements of the body are from their bodies²³. Yet our possession of the soul God has created for us is still a natural consequence of God’s ordinance, as is for example the implementation of the divinely ordained laws of nature. We are all descended from Adam, and that unique filiation ensures the special nature of the human *complexio* we all share.

Second, we know of God’s ordinance from Sacred Scripture. Not only did God breathe into Adam’s nostrils the breath of Life (Genesis 2: 7), but He created other living souls for whose salvation His Son would die. As numerous texts in the Bible make clear, Christ died not for one, but for many. For example, “si enim unius delicto multo mortui sunt, multo magis gratia Dei et donum in gratiam unius hominis Jesu Christi in plures abundavit” (Romans 5: 15), and “sic et Christus semel oblatus ad multorum exhaurienda peccata, secundo sine peccato apparebit expectantibus se in salutem” (Hebrews 9: 28). Descartes invokes these teachings in his letter to Chanut of 6 June 1647. Meditating on the question of whether and in what sense God created all things for our benefit (cf. *Principia Philosophiae*, III, 2-3), Descartes remarks at one point:

les Predicateurs . . . disent que chaque homme en particulier est redevable à Iesus-Christ de tout le sang qu’il a répandu en la Croix, tout de mesme que s’il n’estoit mort que pour un seul. En quoy ils disent bien la verité; mais, comme cela n’empesche pas qu’il n’ait racheté de ce mesme sang un tres-grand nombre d’autres hommes, ainsi je ne voy point que le mystere de l’Incarnation, & tous les autres avantages que Dieu a faits à l’homme, empeschent qu’il n’en puisse avoir fait une infinité d’autres tres-grands à une infinité d’autres creatures. Et bien que je n’inferé point pour cela qu’il y ait des creatures intelligentes dans les etoiles ou ailleurs, je ne voy pas aussi qu’il y ait aucune raison, par laquelle on puisse prouver qu’il n’y en a point; mais je laisse tousiours indecises les questions qui sont de cette sorte, plutost que d’en rien nier ou assurer²⁴.

Not only did God decree that there will be many human souls to enjoy the salvation bought through Christ’s atonement, but if there are in addition extra-terrestrial intelligences, they too will have been created by Him to enjoy whatever benefits His goodness has reserved for them.

²³ Cf. *Meditatio* III, *Objectiones Sextae*, and *Responsio ad Sextas Objectiones*: AT(NP), vii. 50-51, 413-414, 425-426.

²⁴ AT(NP), v. 54-55.

Whether there are extra-terrestrial intelligent beings is for Descartes an open question, but what stronger assurance could he have had for the existence of other human souls than the teachings of the Holy Bible?

For Descartes there was no real *philosophical* problem of the existence of other minds. Its solution was not required for the achievement of the goals he set himself; it had no central role to play in his account of the relations between God, the world, and the *ego*, and so it made no appearance in the *Meditationes*, the *Principia Philosophiae*, or *Les Passions de l'Ame*, while its role in the *Discours de la Méthode* was to be in the service of the beast-machine doctrine, rather than being a philosophical difficulty in its own right. For Descartes the existence of other rational souls was not a topic requiring special epistemological investigation, but ultimately a consequence of God's revealed plan for Man's salvation, and therefore simply a matter of religious faith. It is fitting that these few reflections should enjoy the privilege of being included in a volume honouring Richard Popkin, whose work has continually revealed, for those who have an ear to hear, how unwise it can be to read – and write – the history of early modern philosophy while ignoring the religious and theological contexts in which philosophical doctrines were conceived and propagated.

DESCARTES AND THE METHOD OF ANNIHILATION

AMOS FUNKENSTEIN

Descartes's deep indebtedness to the sceptical tradition of the sixteenth century was uncovered by R. Popkin in his classic study of the history of scepticism; much as Gilson and Koyré alerted us earlier to the strong scholastic background of several Cartesian positions¹. My aim in the following remarks is to point at a few crucial instances of Descartes's thought in which both traditions converged: the radical-fideistic scepticism of the sixteenth century (which largely shared the humanistic bias against the technical scholastic discourse) and the medieval tradition of critical speculations – thought experiments of that which is possible in view of God's absolute power. Only the coupling of both strands, I shall argue further, makes some of Descartes's initial moves intelligible, and may even solve the infamous circularity involved in the transition from the *cogito* to God's existence and constancy.

Sceptical and scholastic traditions are present in the various steps of the systematic destruction of all knowledge in the beginning of the *Discours* and of the *Meditationes*. It is important to distinguish these steps and their order, because they correspond, in an inverse order, to the subsequent steps of reconstructing science: (i) Reasonable doubt suffices to destroy knowledge founded on hearsay and tradition (or authority) only, e.g. history. (ii) Stronger doubt, but still warranted by experience, moves us to doubt sense-perceptions and our sense of reality. (iii) Whether referring to real or imaginary entities, eternal truths still seem to be absolutely certain. Matter may or may not exist, but if it does, it is necessarily extended, and the mathematical propositions concerning extension (geometry) are, it seems, absolutely necessary. The malignant spirit destroys even this certitude with a doubt which, even though it stands beyond any reasonable doubt, is still possible: we may be incessantly deceived either in our most immediate intuitions themselves or, within a protracted chain of inferences, we may assume to have already proven that which we did not or otherwise err in the process of deduction.

¹ R. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (2nd ed., Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979); A. Koyré, *Descartes und die Scolastik* (1923, reprint Darmstadt, 1971); E. Gilson, *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système Cartésien* (Paris, 1930).

Left is only (iv) the self, the existence of which cannot be doubted. *Sum res cogitans* is a proposition beyond even a *possible* doubt. Within the “self” (or mind), we find (v) a host of “ideas”, and among them the idea of an infinite being which cannot have been generated by ourselves and *therefore* possesses and *esse subjective*. God cannot be a deceiver, hence (vi) his existence guarantees the validity of eternal truths, and among them that of (mathematical) physics – matter being nothing but extension *cum* motion. With due critical correction, God’s bonity and constancy guarantees also (vii) the existence of an outside world and the validity of our sense-data. History, alas, never gets reconstructed.

The arguments sustaining the first two steps are taken, as Richard Popkin has shown, from the arsenal of revived scepticism. The “malignant spirit” of the third step, on the other hand, while fitting well into the fideistic intent of some sceptics (as again shown by R. Popkin), epitomizes nonetheless the most radical scholastic reflection about the extent and limits of God’s omnipotence. Descartes himself engaged this tradition directly elsewhere – namely whenever he insisted, as he did time and again throughout his literary career, that God could invalidate eternal truths, create mountains without valleys or cause $1 + 2$ to be non-equal to 3.

Elsewhere I tried to argue that Descartes, very much in the tradition of even the most radical medieval interpreters of the *potentia Dei absoluta* – *potentia Dei ordinata* dialectics, never meant to exempt God from the principle of non-contradiction². His position is not unlike Gregory of Rimini’s who tried to show that God can invalidate past contingents (without violating the PoC); or Holcot’s, who distinguished between the *logica humana*, which is subsumed under the rules of syllogism, and the *logica divina* which is not: hence it is not true that if the divine essence is the father and if the divine essence is the son then the father is the son, and yet no contradiction is involved³. Mersenne, in the second round of

² A. Funkenstein, “Descartes, Eternal Truths and the Divine Omnipotence”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, vi (1975), 185-199; idem, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, 1986), pp. 179-192.

³ Gregory of Rimini, *Lectura super primum et secundum sententiarum* Id. 42-449.1 ed. A.D. Trapp, and V. Marcolino (Berlin and New York, 1979-1984), iii. 362-384; Robert Holcot, *In quatuor libros sententiarum questiones argutissime* (Lyons, 1518) 19.5(4)H; H. Gelber, *Exploring the Boundaries of Reason: Three Questions on the Nature of God by Robert Holcot op* (Toronto, 1983), pp. 26-27 and n. 72. Cf. Already C. Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande* (1867, reprint Graz, 1955) iv. 6-7. It has not been noted that Holcot’s position presupposes that the *sylogismus expositivus* be a schedule for the concatenation of independent propositions. This was so perceived in the Middle Ages, but not by Aristotle, for whom a syllogism – premises and conclusion – was *one* proposition: G. Patzig, *Die Aristotelische Syllogistic* (Tübingen, 1969), pp. 13-14. Cf. Leibniz *Theodicee*, disc. prel. no. 22.

objections, reminded Descartes of this pedigree (he mentions Gabriel Biel and Gregory of Rimini)⁴. Descartes, I believe, also does not exempt God from the PoC; he merely broadens the extent of God's omnipotence by denying mathematical propositions – and other “external truths” – the status of *logically* necessary truth even though they are indeed “clear and distinct”. If this interpretation of Descartes' intents is correct, then the “malignant spirit” does in fact those things which God can do (but does not) *de potentia eius absoluta*: he invalidates our immediate intuitions concerning eternal truths, but not the principle of non-contradiction itself.

Having this tradition in mind, we can, I further believe, solve the apparent circularity involved in the transition from step iv to step v (in our enumeration). Both Mersenne and, more forcefully, Arnauld pointed it out; but the following formulation is even more radical. Let us forgo the problems involved in identifying self-consciousness that is simultaneous with doubt (the *cogito*) with all other “ideas” that we possess at other instances as belonging to *one* self, and let us forgo the similar question (of Caterus, Arnauld, Malebranche and Fenelon) whether the self (*qua* pure mind) is really a “clear and distinct” idea⁴. Let us then, concede both the substantiality of the self and its transparency. Let us also concede that we find in our mind the idea of an infinite being, and that the inference to his *esse subjective* from his *esse objective* is valid (since the latter could not have been generated by me). Being an *inference* only, how could I trust it before laying the malignant spirit to rest? But the malignant spirit (and with it doubts concerning my inference processes) can be laid to rest only *after* God's existence, bonity and truthfulness have been established.

Descartes himself answered these objections by distinguishing between our immediate intuitions (clear and distinct ideas) and the immediate certainty we have while engaging in an inference process as against our recollection of it: the latter may deceive us, but never the former:

Lastly, as to the fact that I was not guilty of circularity when said the only reason we have for being sure that what we clearly and distinctly perceive is true is the fact that God exists, but that we are sure that God exists only because we perceive this clearly: I have already given an adequate explanation of this point in my reply to the Second Objections . . . where I made a distinction between what we in fact perceive clearly and what we remember having perceived clearly on a previous occasion. To begin with, we are sure that God exists because we attend to the arguments which prove this; but subsequently it is enough for us to remember that we perceived something clearly in order for us to be certain that it is true. This would

⁴ *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. J. Coltingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch (Cambridge, 1984), p. 90.

not be sufficient if we did not know that God exists and is not a deceiver⁵.

Descartes's answer is insufficient. It squarely contradicts the first meditation in which even the belief that "whether I am awake or asleep, two and three added together are five, and a square has no more than four sides" should be doubted before being secured by an Archimedean point⁶. Even our most basic intuitions, not only one memory of them in a long chain of inferences, are endangered. Descartes's solution to the problem of circularity is too hasty. Yet it contains a plausible germ if only reformulated in line with his thoughts concerning God's omnipotence. Let us assume that while the malignant spirit may (as the first meditation hints) destroy our faith in basic intuitions (i.e. eternal truths, including geometry), he cannot destroy our faith in the principle of non-contradiction which limits even God's omnipotence. Descartes may wish to say: both the certainty of the self and the inference from the self to God's existence have the status of a *logical* necessity, whereas mathematical truth have a lesser status even while "clear and distinct". The inference to God's existence does not have to await for God's existence to be otherwise safeguarded in order to be valid. If this is the case then circularity is indeed avoided, though at a high price: we must claim to have understood Descartes better than he understood his own thoughts – an always dubious and pretentious assumption. On the other hand, the interpreter of Descartes is often moved by the feeling that, in spite of his sometimes sloppy and ambiguous use of key-terms, there is great precision and consistency to his thinking.

Let me then try and fortify the foregoing interpretations with some further considerations concerning that which Descartes called "intuitions" or "clear and distinct ideas". Descartes's "intuition", much like the Scotistic and nominalistic *cognitio intuitiva intellectiva*, was an *immediate* cognitio, not an inference. Yet while, in the scholastic tradition, it was the awareness of singular things *qua* existents, for Descartes it was the awareness of ideas, and hence does not imply without qualifications the existence of things of which it is an idea. Now, the nominalists themselves, in view of God's omnipotence, admitted that (*de potentia eius absoluta*) God could generate in us an intuitive notion of a non-existing thing (*notitia intuitiva de re non existente*); and Ockham even warned us not

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171 (reply to the fourth objection): cf. p. 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14: cf. *Med.*, AT vii, 436: "Non opus est quaerere qua ratione Deus poterisset ab aeterno facere, ut non fuisset verum bis 4 esse 8 etc.; fateor enim id a nobis intelligi non posse" and *Med.* AT vii, 71, where he states again that we must assert that it lies within God's possibility. In other words: Descartes's attitude as to the *logical* necessity of mathematical truths is ambiguous.

to confuse between those and mere illusions or hallucinations – even though, in the common course of things, intuitive cognition is always, by definition the cognition of an existent, singular thing (*res*)⁷. The Cartesian possibility that our immediate intuitions could be fallacious and yet the principle of non-contradiction will not be violated – here it may have its origin.

The Terminists' reason *why* intuitive cognitions of non-existent things are possible (*de potentia absoluta*) give us also a lead into Descartes ontology. A thing and its cognition are two different things (*res*). The basic ontological maxim of the nominalist was that "every absolute thing, distinct in place and subject from another absolute thing, can exist while another absolute thing is destroyed"⁸ – or even if the whole world around it is destroyed. This *principle of annihilation*, ridiculed by Wyclif, is the anchor of the nominalistic theology, logic and epistemology. God's omnipotence would be infringed if he could not create a white table without first creating whiteness. But if this is the case, then, as Nicolaus of Autrecourt succinctly said, "from the existence of one thing one cannot infer the existence of another"⁹. A later echo of this principle we find in Hume's famous phrase: "There is no object which implies the existence of any other, if we consider these objects in themselves and never look at the ideas we form of them"¹⁰. In the Middle Ages, the principle served primarily in a critical function, namely to indicate what is *not* a thing – e.g. universals or relations.

But under Descartes's (later Hobbes's)¹¹ hands, the principle of annihilation acquired a positive, constructive rather than merely critical function: it permitted Descartes to discern simple ideas and substances. The self is secured after the whole world indeed has been destroyed around it – leaving only it and its absolute property (thinking). Matter is likewise stripped of everything about it that can be destroyed – left are extension, quantity and motion only, a *res extensa*. When Descartes claimed that God could have invalidated mathematics, he may simply have

⁷ Cf. my *Theology and the Scientific Imagination*, pp. 138-139, 244-245.

⁸ William of Ockham, *Quodlibeta* iv, 6; *Sent.*, Prol. 9.1.H.H; in Ph. Bodner, *Ockham's Philosophical Writings* (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 26. cf. E. Hochstaetter, *Studien zur Metaphysik und Erkenntnislehre Wilhelms von Ockham* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1972), pp. 56-57 and my *Theology and the Scientific Imagination*, pp. 64, 135-140, 186.

⁹ J. Weinberg, *Nicolaus of Autrecourt. A Study in 14th Century Thought* (Princeton, 1948); A.-L. Maier, "Das Problem der Evidenz", *Ausgehen des Mittelalter: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Rome, 1964-1977), ii. 367-418.

¹⁰ D. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, i. pt. 3 sec. 6, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1978), p. 86. Cf. also Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (Frankf-Main, 1960), 2.062: "Aus dem Bestehen oder Nichtbestehen eines Sachverhaltens kann nicht auf das Bestehen oder Nichtbestehen eines anderen geschlossen werden".

¹¹ Hobbes, *De corpore*, ii. 7.1.2; *Opera*, ed. W. Molesworth (London, 1839-1845).

meant that God could have abstained from creating matter – because matter is just reified geometry. Whether “eternal truths” are true, i.e., reified, or not depends indeed on God’s will to give being to them – *esse dare* in Thomas’s terminology. And Thomas added, much as Descartes, that this is true even of things whose essence involves existence as a circle circularity: God still has to give being to them¹². Of course, if Descartes’s God were to deny existence – i.e., reification – to the referent of a “clear and distinct idea” it would mean deceiving us, but he still *could* do so. Thomas and Descartes, each in his way, anticipate Leibniz’s claim that real possibles have an *exigentia existentiae*, a drive to exist¹³: it takes good reasons to explain of a real possibility why it fails to exist.

To sum up: woven together in Descartes’s thought are *both* the sceptical and the medieval critical tradition. And he uses both in a constructive rather than critical vein, setting out to renew all knowledge from solid indubitable foundations. In his quarrels with contemporaries as to what is dubitable or indubitable, his positions seem much less arbitrary than they otherwise would if their pedigree were seen¹⁴. And I know of no scholar today whose sense of detecting lost pedigrees and connections matches that of Richard Popkin.

¹² My *Theology and the Scientific Imagination*, pp. 50-57.

¹³ Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C.J. Gebhardt (1875-1890), vii. 194: “Omne possibile exigit existentiae”; cf. iv. 44,614 (“principle of the better”, since he assumes, as of course, that being is “better than” nothingness).

¹⁴ This has proven to be the case also in other domains of his thought: see A. Mark Smith, “Descartes’ Theory of Light and Refraction: A Discourse on Method”, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, xxvii (1987), who argues (convincingly) that both the flaws and achievements of Descartes’ sine-law ought to be seen as derived from his perspectivistic background.

DUTCH SEPHARDI JEWRY, MILLENARIAN POLITICS, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR BRAZIL (1640-1654)

JONATHAN I. ISRAEL

The notion that Jews were a marginal, isolated group which took no significant part in the great political struggles and rivalries of early modern times is so ingrained in the historiography of the period that any contention to the contrary is bound to seem startling and be looked on with scepticism. But the evidence that western Sephardi Jewry (and the Portuguese New Christians in Portugal) played a central role in the vast triangular, trans-Atlantic struggle between Portugal, Spain and the Dutch in the 1640s is extensive and deserves to be analyzed more systematically than has been the case hitherto.

The secession of Portugal from the Spanish crown in December 1640, the outcome of a conspiracy among the Portuguese nobility against Philip IV of Spain, and in favor of the Duke of Braganza, who was now proclaimed King John IV of Portugal, was one of the most dramatic events of the mid-seventeenth century – and one of the most far-reaching in its implications. Its effects, especially after Portuguese Brazil and the Portuguese East Indies followed Portugal itself in throwing off allegiance to the Spanish crown, during 1641, were indeed world-wide in scope. Portugal, a key market and hub of a global empire severed its links with the Spanish Monarchy, at that time still the largest and most powerful world *imperium*, starting a war in the Iberian Peninsula which was to last for over a quarter of a century¹. But if the Lisbon *coup d'état* of December 1640 represented a new beginning for the kingdom of Portugal after sixty years under the hegemony of Spain in Europe and the Indies, the secession also marked the onset of major new dilemmas for the Dutch. For in the period from 1580 to 1640 the Portuguese, under Spain, and the Dutch had been enemies locked in a bitter conflict for supremacy in Brazil, West Africa and the Far East. For the Portuguese, independence presented a desperately needed opportunity to halt the war with the Dutch outside Europe, consolidate what remained of their empire in Brazil,

¹ C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil, 1624-1654* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1973), pp. 100-104; J.H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares. The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven and London, 1986), pp. 597-615; it was not until the Spanish-Portuguese peace of 1668 that the Spanish crown was finally forced to recognize the independence of Portugal.

Africa and Asia, and deploy all their resources against Spain. For the Dutch, the secession presented an opportunity to weaken Spain permanently. By helping the Portuguese against Spain, the Dutch could also expect to conquer more territory in the Spanish Netherlands – the Stadholder Frederick Henry in effect captured Hulst, Sas van Gent, and other enclaves in Flanders during the early 1640s – and make fresh gains at Spanish expense in the Caribbean. On the other hand, halting the struggle with the Portuguese and helping them against Philip IV also held serious disadvantages for the Dutch colonial companies². A volte-face in Dutch policy towards Portugal would mean giving up plans to extend the Dutch-occupied zone in Brazil and for further expansion at Portuguese expense in Africa, Ceylon, and southern India.

Initially, though, the secession of Portugal posed less of a dilemma for Dutch Sephardi Jewry than it did for the Dutch regent class which dominated the politics of the Republic. In 1640, Amsterdam Jews were not yet major share-holders in the colonial companies and as their principal traffic, that with Portugal had been seriously eroded by the resumption of war with Spain, since 1621, they were bound to look with enthusiasm on any circumstances likely to restore it³. Thus the Portuguese secession offered the prospect of Dutch ships and goods being allowed back legally into the ports of Portugal which, in turn, could be expected to revive Sephardi business activity in Holland and reverse the decline of the Amsterdam community which had been in progress for two decades, since Philip IV had imposed his total embargo on Dutch ships and merchandise in the ports of Spain and Portugal in April 1621⁴.

The break-away of Portugal from Spain was also bound to find favor among most of the Portuguese New Christian diaspora in western Europe. The Portuguese New Christians resident at Rouen, Bordeaux, and Bayonne, who enjoyed the protection of Cardinal Richelieu as long as they were discreet about their private Judaism, could now re-establish their links with Portugal, broken since France had entered the Thirty Years' War against Spain in 1635 and at the same time support Richelieu's policy of helping the Portuguese achieve their independence so as to weaken Spain, a policy in which the Cardinal's New Christian favor-

² Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Historie of verhael van saken van staet en oorlogh in, ende ontrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden* (The Hague, 1667-1671), iv. 197-199; Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, pp. 103-104.

³ Jonathan I. Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609-1660", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, iii (1978), 29-31.

⁴ *Ibid.*; John IV readmitted Dutch ships and cargoes to the ports of Portugal by edict of 21 January 1641: see Edgar Prestage, *A embaixada de Tristão de Mendonça Furtado a Holanda em 1641* (Coimbra, 1920), p. 14.

ite, Alphonse López, was associated⁵. It is true that in Spain, the Portuguese New Christians, who had greatly benefited from the policies of the Count-Duke of Olivares since he had begun to rely heavily on their financial resources in 1627⁶, were bound to remain loyal to the Spanish crown. And at Lisbon several factors of the great Portuguese bankers at Madrid joined in the conspiracy of 1641 to overthrow the new king of Portugal, John IV, and bring about the resubmission of the country to Spain⁷. But Olivares's policy of drawing the New Christians and their capital from Portugal into Spain⁸, and granting special concessions to their nominees and factors at Lisbon, had also meant alienating the majority who were excluded from these opportunities⁹. Most of the Portuguese New Christians remaining in Portugal had no links with the *asentistas* in Madrid and Seville and no interest in opposing the Portuguese secession. On the contrary, the political restoration of Portugal could not succeed without forging a whole new financial apparatus centered on Lisbon and it was natural enough that leading Lisbon *conversos* who were free of links with Madrid, such as the merchant-bankers Manoel Garcia Franco, Balthasar Rodrigues da Mattos and Duarte da Silva, should wholeheartedly have backed a revolt which simultaneously enabled them to demonstrate their loyalty to the "patria", Portugal and gain a dominant position in Portuguese finance and trade.

Thus, in 1641 the interests of Dutch Sephardi Jewry converged with those of their New Christian relatives, associates and correspondents in Portugal and in France. All three groups had a material stake in backing the Portuguese restoration against Spain and in supporting the peace moves between Portugal and the United Provinces which were already in alliance with France. During the first three or four years of its struggle for independence, Portugal was in fact in an extremely precarious position militarily and financially and had Olivares and his fellow ministers not concentrated their efforts on trying to suppress the revolt of Catalonia (which had broken out earlier in 1640) before that of Portugal, the secession would, in all probability, have collapsed¹⁰. In the years 1641-1643,

⁵ I. S. Revah, *Le Cardinal Richelieu et la restauration du Portugal* (Lisbon, 1950), pp. 10-16.

⁶ James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers at the Madrid Court, 1626-1650* (New Brunswick, 1982), ch. 2; Elliott, *Olivares*, pp. 300-304.

⁷ In particular Pedro de Baeça da Silveira, brother of Jorge de Paz, one of the leading bankers in Madrid: Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers*, pp. 125-126.

⁸ António Vieira was alluding to this in his 1643 *proposta* when he wrote: "se o Castelhano, para reduzir Portugal a província e lhe quebrantar as forças, tomou por arbitrio retirar-lhe os mercadores e chamar para as praças de Castela os homens de negócio, chame-os Vossa Majestade e restitua-os a Portugal": A. Vieira, *Obras Escolhidas*, ed. A. Sergio and H. Cidade (Lisbon, 1951-1954), iv. 15.

⁹ Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers*, pp. 125-126.

¹⁰ Elliott, *Olivares*, pp. 608-610, 612.

John IV lacked the resources to sustain more than an wholly inadequate army and a token fleet. Portugal's seaborne communications with her empire in Brazil, Africa, and Asia, on which her future prospects largely depended, were at the mercy of the Dutch. Not surprisingly therefore, one of John IV's first priorities in the desperate struggle on which he now embarked was to end the conflict with the Dutch as quickly as possible and secure Dutch aid not only in the form of political support, but also arms, munitions and naval stores. The first Portuguese ambassador to the Dutch Republic, Dom Tristão de Mendonça Furtado, was sent off in January 1641, a mere few weeks after the Lisbon coup, with instructions to procure a ten-year truce in Brazil, Africa, and Asia, and carrying credit notes, including a credit for 100,000 *cruzados* issued by the Lisbon New Christian banker Manoel Garcia Franco, for the purchase of arms and munitions at Amsterdam¹¹.

The negotiations between the States General's delegates for Portuguese affairs and Dom Tristão were the principal talking-point of the early months of 1641 not only among the diplomatic community at The Hague but among the merchant élite and the Sephardi community at Amsterdam. The directors of East and West India Companies looked on with growing displeasure as the value of their shares began to slide¹². The shares of both companies lost over ten per cent of their value on the Amsterdam Exchange during these months as it became clear that those elements in the States of Holland and States General in favor of a Dutch-Portuguese truce had the upper hand. The Jews, the evidence shows, were in the thick of the deliberations surrounding the truce talks as well as the discussions over arms purchases. Although the Jewish subjects of the Republic are nowhere mentioned by name in the text of the truce terms finalized in June 1641, they are referred to three times in the text by means of an obvious circumlocution which, as was later made clear, was mutually intended to refer specifically to the Jews¹³. Those Amster-

¹¹ Virginia Rau, "A embaixada de Tristão de Mendonça Furtado e os arquivos notariais holandeses", *Anais da Academia Portuguesa da História*, 2nd ser., viii (1958), 102.

¹² Aitzema, *Historie*, iv. 198-1988.

¹³ Cornelis Musch in interview with the next Portuguese ambassador to the United Provinces, Sousa Coutinho, asserted in reference to clause 25 of the Truce "que esta clauzula metêrão expreçamente sò pelos judeus, porque os não quizerão nomear": see the *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho durante a sua embaixada em Holanda* (Coimbra, 1920-1955), ii. 146-147. Sousa Coutinho to Marquês de Niza, The Hague, 8 July 1647. Some months later, again referring to clause 25, Sousa Coutinho reported to King John IV 'que claramente querem que falle dos judeus, e que sem os nomear se faça delles expreça menção naquella particula que diz os subditos destas Provincias nascidos nellas ou em qualquer outra parte: e não ha duvida Senhor que por isso o fizerão naquella forma e que pois o primeiro embaxador de Vostra Magestade o acordou assym': *ibid.*, ii. 313-314; Sousa Coutinho to John IV, The Hague, 24 February 1648.

dam Sephardim consulted by the States General's deputies in the drawing up of the truce terms would certainly have included members of the Mahamad and the leading Sephardi merchants then trading with Portugal and its empire. Garcia Franco's credit note for 100,000 *cruzados* was drawn on the wealthy Amsterdam Sephardi merchant Francisco Ramires Pina (Isaac Naar), who had long been trading with Lisbon, was a specialist in jewellery, especially pearls from Portuguese India, and was well-known to the Portuguese New Christian financial elite in Portugal¹⁴. Francisco Ramires Pina was also a member of the *Mahamad* at this time though he died during these months, and the servicing of the contract for 100,000 *cruzados* worth of guns, gunpowder, siege equipment and naval stores was taken over by his brother-in-law, Lopo Ramires (David Curiel), another merchant-banker who had long been trading with Lisbon, and his relative (and Lopo's business associate) Duarte Ramires Pina (also Isaac Naar)¹⁵. Bento (David) Osorio who had been *parnas* the previous year, and who also had major financial connections with Lisbon, would, we can be sure, also have been involved.

There is no doubt that Dutch Sephardi Jewry as a group had a major stake in the Dutch-Portuguese truce terms of June 1641. The most vital point for them was that they should be permitted to trade legally from Holland and Dutch Brazil with Portugal and, through Portugal, with the Portuguese empire and that their goods and cash in the hands of their factors in Portuguese ports should be expressly exempt from the attentions of the Inquisition even where such property was found in the possession of New Christians arrested in Portugal on suspicion of judaizing. In theory, the truce terms gave them more than this for a key clause, Clause XXV, also gave them protection for their persons on Portuguese territory, something which the States General had previously attempted to obtain for its Jewish subjects during the abortive 1632-1633 peace talks with Spain¹⁶. On that occasion Spanish ministers had rejected Dutch de-

¹⁴ Rau, "A embaixada de Tristão de Mendonça Furtado", pp. 102, 107, 111.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Gemeente Archief Amsterdam PA 334/1323, "Registro dos parnasim" for the year 5400. For more on the relations of the Ramires Pina and Lopo Ramires, see L. Fuks, "Een rechtsstrijd onder Amsterdamse Sefardim in de 17e eeuw", 't *Exempel dwinght, Opstellen aangeboden aan Prof. Mr. I. Kisch* (Zwolle, 1977), pp. 178-179.

¹⁶ After demanding freedom of movement for all subjects of the Dutch state in the European territories of the Spanish crown, the Dutch delegates during these talks demanded (Article IX): "Dat die van de Portugeesche natie, inwoonders ende ingesetenen van de Vereenichde Provintien die zijn ofte naemals sullen komen, van wat religie of geloof die souden mogen wesen, so wel als andere ingesetenen van de voors. Provintien het effect van 't tegenwoordigen Tractaet soo in Nederlandt, als in Spaegnen ende alomme in 't Spaensche gebiet, volkomentlick sullen geniten": Aitzema, *Historie*, iii. 78; M.G. de Boer, *Die Friedensunterhandlungen zwischen Spanien und den Niederlanden in den Jahren 1632 und 1633* (Groningen, 1898), pp. 67, 89-90: on that occasion, one of the Spanish

mands regarding the Jews domiciled in the Republic out of hand. But in June 1641 the Portuguese gave way on this point¹⁷. Clause XXV reads:

Et liberum esto utriusque partis subditis, cujuscunque nationis, conditionis, qualitatis et religionis, nullis exceptis (sive illi in alterius Ditione nati sunt, sive inibi habitasse dicantur) frequentare, navigare et commercari qualibet mercium et mercaturae forte in regnis, provinciis, territoriis ac insulis respective in Europa atque aliorum ab hac Lineae parte sitis; nec fas esto neutrius subditos mercandi gratia, confluentes in alterius terris, sitis ut supra, in mercibus asportandis aut vero exportandis magis aggravare gabellis, impositionibus aliisve jurisbus, quam ipsissimos incolas et subditos carundum Terrerum; sed gaudeant pariter respective hujusmodi indultis et privilegiis quibus antehac illi usi sunt, priusquam Lusitania a Castilianis fuerit subacta.¹⁸

On the other hand, Dom Tristão and his staff were careful to minimize the concessions that had to be made on the religious front. The Dutch had begun by demanding full liberty of conscience for their subjects in Portugal¹⁹. The final text conceded the right of private practice to subjects of the United Provinces on Portuguese territory but expressly excluded non-Christians, i.e., Jews, from this provision (Clause XXVI): “subditi ac incolae harum Provinciarum qui Christiani sunt . . . utentur et fruuntur libertate conscientiae in domibus suis privatis ac intra naves libero religionis exercitio”²⁰. In theory, then, the persons as well as property of Dutch Jews on Portuguese territory were protected but Jewish practice was forbidden to Dutch subjects even in private.

The truce agreement did incorporate, however, one other significant concession to the Jews. It was of concern to the Amsterdam Sephardi community that Jews resident in Netherlands Brazil should be expressly guaranteed the same protection and rights under the Truce as were

ministers of state, using the same circumlocution, but again directly (and only) referring to the Jews, commented ‘que no se debe por ningun caso dar las ventajas a Portugueses que piden, pero bien se ajustaria a que en los nabios donde van sus haciendas, no fuese confiscado mas de lo que les pertenece, punto que seria de gran satisfacion para los rebeldes’: see Israel, ‘Spain and the Dutch Sephardim’, p. 27.

¹⁷ Antonio de Sousa de Tavares, *Relação do tratado de 1641 entre Portugal e Holanda (August, 1641)* (Lisbon, 1917), p. 10; Prestage, *A embaixada de Tristão de Mendonça*, p. 80.

¹⁸ J. du Mont, *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens*, vi, part 1 (Amsterdam, 1728), p. 217. For the Dutch text, see Aitzema, *Historie*, p. 208; the first part of Clause XXV was rendered in Portuguese: “E será livre aos subditos de huma e outra parte de qualquer nação, condição, qualidade e religião, sem excepção de algum, ou elles sejam nacidos em a jurisdição de cada huma das partes, ou nellas tenham seu domicilio, assistir, navegar e commerciar com qualquer sorte de mercadorias e empregos em os Reynos, Provincias, termos e Ilhas em Europa, e em qualquer outra parte situadas daquem da linha”; see Prestage, *A embaixada de Tristão de Mendonça*, p. 80.

¹⁹ Sousa de Tavares, *Relação do tratado de 1641*, p. 16.

²⁰ Du Mont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vi, part 1, p. 217.

granted to subjects of the States General in Europe. This they obtained in Clause IX which stipulates that the same protection and recognition was to be enjoyed by residents in the territories and conquests of the Dutch West India Company “cujuscunque nationis, conditionis aut religionis sint”²¹.

Dutch trade with Portugal underwent a marked revival in the early 1640s and the recognized, protected participation of the Dutch Sephardim in this traffic was clearly of immense benefit to the community as a whole, as well as to élite merchants such as Lopo Ramires, David Osorio, Diogo Martines, Francisco Lopes de Azevedo, Duarte Ramires Pina and Jeronimo Nunes da Costa (Moseh Curiel). In the three years 1643-1645, Dutch ships accounted for over half the total of non-Portuguese vessels entering the port of Lisbon²². As a result of their participation, the economic decline of the Dutch Sephardim, so evident in the 1620s and 1630s, was decisively halted.²³ In 1641, the number of Jewish accounts with the Amsterdam Exchange Bank stood at only 89 as compared with 106 twenty years earlier, in 1620, the Jewish share of the total number of accounts having fallen back from nine to six per cent²⁴. By 1646, by contrast, the number of Jewish deposits had risen sharply to 126, or eight per cent of the total²⁵. The economic position of Dutch Sephardi Jewry had been transformed. Decline had given way to steady expansion.

But the gains accruing to Dutch Sephardi Jewry and their New Christian relatives in France and Portugal were by no means limited to the economic sphere. A Portugal free of Spanish control initially appeared to open up a whole range of new possibilities. Since John IV needed all the financial assistance he could get, and the merchant community of Amsterdam during 1641 put, as we know, great emphasis on his financial weakness²⁶, there was seemingly every prospect of extracting, in return for financial help, sweeping improvements in the lot of Portugal's New Christians despite the vociferous opposition displayed by the Portuguese Cortes and clergy at this time to any suggestion of relaxing the systematic

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Virginia Rau, ‘Subsidios para o estudo do movimento dos portos de Faro e Lisboa durante o século XVII’, *Anais da Academia Portuguesa de História*, 2nd ser., v (1954), 241.

²³ Jonathan I. Israel, ‘The Economic Contribution of Dutch Sephardi Jewry to Holland's Golden Age, 1595-1713’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, xcvi (1983), 510, 516, 519-520.

²⁴ J.G. van Dillen, ‘Vreemdelingen te Amsterdam in de eerste helft der zeventiende eeuw. 1. De Portugeesche Joden’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, i (1935), 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Brieven van Nicolaes van Reigersberch aan Hugo de Groot*, Werken van het Historisch Genootschap, ser. III, no. 15 (Amsterdam, 1901).

discrimination to which they were subject²⁷. Amid their initial euphoria, it seems, Jewish leaders even suggested that in return for their help, the king should consider permitting the establishment of two public synagogues in Portugal (one in Lisbon and one in Oporto?). Antonio de Sousa de Macedo, one of the propagandists of the Portuguese secession, records that “regem (habemus) ita catholicum, ut in necessitatibus principii Regni sui non admiserit propositiones Hebraeorum petentes duas synagogas in Lusitania pro quibus offerebant ingentes pecunias”²⁸. Amid the atmosphere of rabid judeophobia prevailing in Portugal at that time this was not practical politics. But what definitely was on the agenda, as we see from Antonio Vieira’s *propostas* of 1643 and 1646 to the Portuguese king on the subject of the New Christians²⁹, was the proposal to obtain a general amnesty from the Pope for past religious offences against the Catholic Church and to curb the powers of the Inquisition, it was hoped, to an even greater extent than the Count-Duke of Olivares had achieved in Spain³⁰. Also demanded was the exemption of New Christian capital invested in commerce from confiscation by the Inquisition and abolition of the ban on New Christians holding public offices in Portugal or being admitted to the military orders. These proposals were put to John IV by the great Jesuit, Vieira, a committed opponent of the Inquisition, but there is little doubt that they were drawn up in consultation with the New Christian leadership in Lisbon or that they mirrored the immediate aspirations of the New Christians in Portugal. A key section of Vieira’s 1646 *proposta* is actually entitled “O que querem os homens de nação”³¹.

But there were, or so it seemed, still further possibilities beyond increased security for, and improvements in the status of Portugal’s New Christians. Dutch Sephardim saw in the Portuguese restoration a chance to tighten their links with Portugal and her overseas empire at every level and erase from their minds all feelings of divided loyalties. They could participate fully in creating the sense of a new beginning, in the mystical, Sebastianist speculations which surrounded the political restoration of Portugal and which were to culminate in Vieira’s dream of a Portugal which would lead and redeem mankind. Remarking on this general enthusiasm among the Dutch Sephardim for the Portuguese cause, in May 1644, the then Portuguese ambassador at The Hague, Francisco de

²⁷ J. Lúcio de Azevedo, *História dos cristãos novos portugueses* (2nd edn., Lisbon, 1975), pp. 238-239.

²⁸ Lúcio de Azevedo, *História dos cristãos novos portugueses*, p. 238.

²⁹ Vieira, *Obras Escolhidas*, iv. 1-62.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, iv. 48-49.

³¹ *Ibid.*, iv. 42-44.

Sousa Coutinho, advised the king to entrust the funds for diplomatic expenses in central and northern Europe to the Sephardi bankers in Amsterdam:

... e advirto a V. Magestade que por mais judeos que sejam os portuguezes que ali há, emfim lá tem huma afeição a Portugal que fas desejarem mais servir a V. Magestade do que os flamengos, e não o digo sem cauza ...³²

The zeal for the Portuguese cause shown by Duarte Nunes da Costa (Jacob Curiel) of Hamburg who, though a Jew, was made a knight (*cavaleiro fidalgo*) of the Portuguese royal household, in June 1641, and "Agent" of the crown of Portugal at Hamburg in 1644, his son, Jeronimo, who moved to Amsterdam in 1642, was also knighted and made "Agent" of the Portuguese crown in that city in 1645 and, initially at least, of Duarte's brother, Lopo Ramires who though a Jew and residing at Amsterdam was made a *cavaleiro fidalgo da casa real* in June 1642, was, therefore, merely the most overt and public example of an enthusiasm which, for a time, infused almost the entire western Sephardi diaspora outside of Spain³³. In 1643, Antonio Vieira took the "love" of the Sephardim of north-west Europe for their former *patria* to be so intense that he assured John IV that

Todos estes, pelo amor que tem a Portugal, como patria sua, e a Vossa Magestade, como seu rei natural, estão desejosos de poderem tornar para o Reino e servirem a Vossa Magestade com suas fazendas, como fazem aos reis estranhos³⁴.

Indeed, Vieira clearly believed that this "love" for Portugal could be used by the king to weaken and eventually destroy these Portuguese exiles' Judaism³⁵. Duarte Nunes da Costa, whose allegiance to Judaism was strong, presumably did not envisage a mass return to Portugal. We can probably assume that he was hoping, rather, to strengthen the private practice of Judaism in Portugal by bridling the Inquisition and, at the same time, reinforce the Sephardi diaspora by strengthening the links between the New Christians in Portugal and the exiles in north-west Europe. In one of his letters to the Portuguese ambassador at Paris, Duarte deplores the failure to make it safe in Portugal for the exiles to

³² *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, i. 149: Sousa Coutinho to John IV, The Hague, 3 May 1644.

³³ Jonathan I. Israel, "The Diplomatic Career of Jeronimo Nunes da Costa: an Episode in Dutch-Portuguese Relations of the Seventeenth Century", *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, xcvi (1983), 168-169.

³⁴ Vieira, *Obras Escolhidas*, iv. 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.

return there for temporary visits. Referring to the loyalty to Portugal of the Jews of north-west Europe, he wrote:

mas bem sabe V. excelencia que os que estamos desterrados da nossa patria, somos impossibilitados de ir a ella, e isso he o que me impide não mandar meu filho [Jeronimo Nunes da Costa], que se não for esse inconveniente não reparata em elle los mays irem a China por terra . . .³⁶

The idea that in 1643 most Sephardi Jews of north-west Europe would have been willing to travel overland to China to demonstrate their zeal for a king and country which still championed the most virulent persecution of Jews and Judaism then to be found in the world may strike us to-day as far-fetched or comical, but there can be no doubting the intensity of the feeling to which Duarte alludes. Even a rabbi such as Menasseh ben Israel was swept up in the tide of enthusiasm for the Portuguese restoration during the early 1640s. Thus Menasseh remarked in the dedication of the second part of his *Conciliador*, in 1641, that it was now especially appropriate to dedicate such a work to the directors of the West India Company, as he did, as Portugal was now free of Spain, the struggle between Portuguese and Dutch over, the truce between Portugal and the Dutch about to be signed and the "ancient hatred" between the two nations at an end:

Mayormente a tiempo que el benigno rey João IV, buelto a su natural y hereditario regno injustamente hasta agora de otro poseido, cessando el antiguo odio, seguira la desseada paz: la qual siendo yo Lusitano con animo Bataveo, me sera gratissima³⁷.

The great Jesuit António Vieira was intent on forging closer links between Portugal and the western Sephardi diaspora in order to strengthen the Portuguese state and increase its chances of surviving its struggle for independence and to retain its empire. As part of this policy he wished to curb the Inquisition and ease the pressure on the New Christians. But his ultimate purpose was to undermine Judaism and bring both Sephardim and New Christians back to Christ³⁸. Conversely, Jewish leaders such as Duarte Nunes da Costa who was one of the leading figures in the Sephardi community at Hamburg, and Menasseh ben Israel, were eager to use the power of the Portuguese state, at a moment when it seemed

³⁶ Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), Miscellanea da Graça, Cella O, Caixa 17, tomo 4B.fo.549v: Duarte Nunes da Costa to Vidigueira, Hamburg, 7/27 June 1643.

³⁷ Menasseh ben Israel, *Segunda Parte del Conciliador o de la conveniencia de los lugares de la S. Escripura, que repugnantes entre si parecen* (Amsterdam, 1641), epistola dedicatoria.

³⁸ A.J. Saraiva, "António Vieira, Menasseh ben Israel et le cinquième empire", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, vi (1972), 35.

possible to exert real influence, not just to ease the pressure on the New Christians and strengthen communications between them and the Sephardi diaspora in the material interests of both but, surely, because it seemed to them that Judaism – and rejection of Christ – both in Portugal and northern Europe would gain by this. To many in the Sephardi diaspora bridling the Inquisition and improving communications with Portugal and Portuguese Brazil spelt above all an opportunity to proselytize among the New Christians and draw them decisively away from Christianity – and nowhere were the chances of this more promising than in Brazil³⁹. A figure such as Isaac de Castro Tartas who migrated from Holland to Netherlands Brazil in 1641, at the age of sixteen, and then crossed, in October 1644, to Bahia in the Portuguese zone, in order to proselytize among the New Christians there⁴⁰, was, in a way, giving expression to a general impulse then permeating the western Sephardi world, and which very likely inspired Menasseh's own stated intention at that time to emigrate to Brazil.

In Netherlands Brazil itself, the Dutch-Portuguese Truce greatly strengthened the position of the Jews, or rather appeared to do so. It was in the short period of peace in Brazil (1641-1644) that the Jewish population of Netherlands Brazil reached its peak, approximately 1,450 in 1644⁴¹. The peaceful conditions of those years encouraged the expansion of sugar output and induced more Jews to acquire plantations and settle well away from the main community in Recife. There are indications that during these years small Sephardi congregations formed at such places as Paraíba and at Itamaracá.

But the dream of Dutch-Portuguese reconciliation and the peaceful co-existence of the two Brazils was soon to be rudely shattered. Already in 1644 there was trouble in Maranhão, in the north, and a further slump in West India Company shares demonstrated a strong underlying anxiety about the future of Netherlands Brazil⁴². But this was as nothing compared to the shock of the insurrection of the Portuguese Catholic planters in the Dutch zone of Brazil, in June 1645⁴³. The Dutch garrisons in Brazil (pared down to a minimum since the 1641 as the Company had switched its attention to the Caribbean) were too weak to react. The

³⁹ Anita Novinsky, *Cristãos Novos na Baha* (São Paulo, 1972), pp. 135-136.

⁴⁰ Arnold Wiznitzer, "Isaac de Castro, Brazilian Jewish Martyr", *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, xlviii (1957), 65-67.

⁴¹ Arnold Wiznitzer, *The Jews of Colonial Brazil* (New York, 1960), pp. 120-138; I.S. Emmanuel, "Seventeenth-Century Brazilian Jewry: A Critical Review", *American Jewish Archives*, xiv (1962), 32-68.

⁴² *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, i, 128, 139, 162, 181.

⁴³ Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *Olinda Restaurada. Guerra e açúcar no Nordeste, 1630-1654* (Rio de Janeiro, 1975), pp. 76-79.

insurgents swept across the whole expanse of the Dutch zone beyond the fortifications of Recife, Mauricia, Paraíba, Itamaracá, and one or two other forts, sacking the property of Dutchmen and Jews as they went. Within three months practically the whole of Netherlands Brazil outside five or six fortified bases was either conquered or devastated⁴⁴. Morale throughout Netherlands Brazil collapsed. The outlying Sephardi communities disappeared, the Jews being from now on effectively shut up in Recife and Mauricia. The previously flourishing sugar trade between Dutch Brazil and Holland was suddenly totally paralyzed. All confidence in the future of the colony was gone. Jewish refugees began to stream back to Holland and soon also to Zealand.

The revolt of the Portuguese planters in Dutch Brazil in the summer of 1645 was a stunning blow to Dutch Sephardi Jewry. It was a blow not just to its trade and colonizing activities but to its entire political and emotional world. For the rebels, fired with Catholic zeal, acted in the name of John IV and received arms, supplies and encouragement from Portugal via Bahia. It is true that for the rest of the 1640s John IV and his ministers in Europe constantly reiterated that the revolt in Dutch Brazil had nothing to do with them, hoping by thus disowning the rebellion to avoid war with the Dutch in the Atlantic, Africa and the Far East. But in the Republic no-one was fooled by the subterfuge or failed to realize that the king was surreptitiously supporting the war against his ostensible Dutch allies.

The change in the previously euphoric mood of Dutch Sephardi Jewry was immediate and palpable. As realization of the magnitude of the disaster sank in, the community at Amsterdam quickly turned against the Portuguese diplomatic mission at The Hague. Later in the summer of 1645, Sousa Coutinho wrote to his superior, the Conde de Vidigueira, at Paris, in a mood of evident anxiety:

Deos nos acuda e do hum expedente a estes negocios em forma que acabemos por huma vez. O povo de Amsterdam fes bravuras, os judeos me condenarão a pedradas e aqui he muito facil a execução, e o que peor he que os que cuidamos são amigos são os peores, e o certo e que todos são huns⁴⁵.

The image of a Jewish public so menacing that its threats to stone an ambassador in the streets were taken seriously may not fit in with our usual perceptions of Jewish life in the seventeenth century, but there can be no doubt that this was the reality in Amsterdam in the summer of 1645. The

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46: the losses suffered by the Dutch in Brazil in 1645, according to Vieira, "verdadeiramente foram grandíssimas, porque os levantados queimaram capitánias inteiras, e nelas muito engenhos": Vieira, *Obras Escolhidas*, i. 128.

⁴⁵ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho* 1, i. 308.

tide of emotion reached such proportions that there were warnings from the burgomasters and on 22 Elul 5405 the Amsterdam *Mahamad* passed a resolution forbidding members of the community to utter public insults, “palavras descompostas contra o senhor embaixador de Portugal”, or cause “scandal” when discussing Brazilian affairs⁴⁶.

The fury is understandable when we consider how basic was Netherlands Brazil in the life of Dutch Sephardi Jewry at that time. One of the pillars of its existence had collapsed. Menasseh ben Israel was among those who lost heavily financially, the collapse of Dutch Brazil being partly responsible for the subsequent failure of his printing business⁴⁷. Manuel Martínez (David Abrabanel) Dormido, who was to become one of the founders of the Sephardi community in London in the mid-1650s, later recalled in 1654 how in 1641 he had sent his two sons to Brazil “with great cargazons of goods of which proseedes I did looke for above 500 chests of suggars which they had to send me in the yeare 1646 . . . it happened (though) foure months before that the Portugalls and dwellers in the country of Pernambuco (Recife) did rize, amongst whom were my debtors and possessors of my estate”⁴⁸. Dormido claimed to have lost 150,000 guilders in Brazil in 1645, mostly owed to him by Portuguese planters who joined the insurrection.

The angry menaces uttered by Amsterdam Jews in the late summer and autumn of 1645 included much talk of the launching of a powerful Dutch counter-offensive in Brazil which would teach the Portuguese their lesson⁴⁹. In fact, the revolt of the planters in Netherlands Brazil marked the parting of the ways politically between the Dutch Sephardim and the New Christian merchant élite of Lisbon. The many New Christians who had backed the Portuguese restoration in the early 1640s continued to lend strong support to the new régime, and its initiatives in Brazil and West Africa, during the later 1640s. The finance for the major Portuguese expedition sent to Brazil in 1647 which eventually gave Portugal the upper hand in its long struggle with the Dutch in the South Atlantic was arranged by Duarte da Silva, the best-known Lisbon New Christian merchant of the period, and a consortium of other New Christians, through the mediation of António Vieira⁵⁰. Duarte da Silva was also instrumental in organizing the finance for the subsequent expedition of Sal-

⁴⁶ Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, Archives of the Portuguese Jewish Community vol. XIX (Hascamoth), p. 281: resolution of the Mahamad, 22 Elul 2405.

⁴⁷ Cecil Roth, *The Life of Menasseh ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 69.

⁴⁸ Lucien Wolf, “American Elements in the Re-Settlement”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, iii (1899), 91.

⁴⁹ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, iii. 314.

⁵⁰ Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, p. 189.

vador de Sá which culminated, in 1648, in the recapture of Angola from the Dutch⁵¹. Among the most active of the Lisbon New Christians supplying arms and munitions to Portuguese Brazil and therefore also to the insurgents in Netherlands Brazil in the late 1640s was Jerónimo Gomes Pessoa who subsequently fled from the Portuguese Inquisition first to Italy and then to Amsterdam where he took the Jewish name Abraham Israel Pessoa⁵². The Sephardim in Holland, by contrast, stirred up by relatives streaming back from Brazil, threw their support behind those elements in the Republic pressing for decisive action against the Portuguese in Brazil. This placed the Jews in a curious position within the labyrinth of Dutch politics. The Amsterdam city council and most of the other towns of the States of Holland, absorbed in intricate negotiations with Spain and anxious to safeguard their commerce with Portugal, were unwilling to be drawn into a major conflict in Brazil⁵³. Apart from the West India Company whose financial position now looked hopeless, the party committed to a powerful counter-offensive in Brazil looked distinctly meager. The Jews thus became the adherents of a restricted pressure group headed by the States of Zeeland, the province with the largest stake in the West India Company and Brazil, and a minority of Holland towns, led by Leiden⁵⁴. Nevertheless even Amsterdam agreed that something had to be done to rescue Dutch Brazil and in 1647, after the main Portuguese battle fleet was sent across to Brazil, the States General belatedly prepared a major expedition. The strategy in the minds of the planners of this Dutch expedition of 1647 was to save Netherlands Brazil by taking the offensive in Portuguese Brazil and capturing Bahia; for without Bahia, it was believed, Dutch Brazil could not be safe.

During 1647 the Dutch Sephardim, determined to increase the pressure on Portugal, did all they could to undermine John IV's standing in the Republic, convey a sense of Portuguese weakness, and whip up a general outcry against Portugal. In July Sousa Coutinho reported to his superior at Paris that:

Tem lançado fama que ha revoltas no reyno e que S. Magestade esta arrestado pela nobreza, e que a fortaleza de S. Evão estava por Castella, e antes destas novas, que os judeos são os que mais publicação e solemnizão, dizem que S. Magestade tinha arrestado todos os navios que se achevão nos ports do reino todo, por mandar armada ao Brasil⁵⁵.

⁵¹ David Grant Smith, "The Mercantile Class of Portugal and Brazil in the Seventeenth Century: A Socio-Economic Study of the Merchants of Lisbon and Bahia, 1620-1690" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), pp. 78-80.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202; Cabral de Mello, *Olinda Restaurada*, p. 103.

⁵³ Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, pp. 186-188.

⁵⁴ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, ii. 237.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 154: Sousa de Coutinho to Niza, The Hague, 22 July 1647.

In fact John IV and his ministers did feel highly vulnerable. They knew that Portugal could not fight Spain and the Dutch Republic at the same time and that if the Dutch did launch a full-scale war against Portugal there was every possibility that the empire would collapse and be shared out between Spain and the Dutch. Officially the Portuguese crown was only too willing to allocate the whole of Dutch Brazil as it had been at its fullest extent in 1645 to the Dutch and might have been so in practice had the king been able to control the Catholic zeal of the Portuguese planters on the spot. As the preparations for the Dutch expedition went ahead, Sousa Coutinho made frantic efforts to win over Dutch opinion outside Zeeland and to achieve a compromise solution.

After long delays a Dutch war-fleet commanded by Withe de With finally sailed for Brazil in December 1647. There is no doubt that the entire Dutch Sephardi community, even Jeronimo Nunes da Costa, "Agent" of the Portuguese Crown in the United Provinces, pinned great hopes on this expedition. Jeronimo's uncle, Lopo Ramires had by this time already switched his allegiance from Portugal to Spain⁵⁶. Jeronimo continued to promote Portugal's interests at Amsterdam – only his notion of "Portuguese interests" was one which centered on their compatibility with those of Dutch Sephardi Jewry. It is quite clear that in late 1647, a crucial juncture in the great drama, he used his influence to exaggerate Dutch strength in the eyes of John IV and his ministers and in trying to ensure the full restoration of Dutch Brazil⁵⁷. Advising the Marquês de Niza, early in December 1647, that the Dutch were still having difficulties in getting their "armada" and troops for Brazil ready, he added

e ainda que Jeronimo Nunes (da Costa) avise a V. Excelencia outra cosa, he porque não sabe se não dar roins novas contra nos, e per que conste a V. Excelencia quão velhaco he o seu tio Lopo Ramires, e como estes cães não andão mais que a dar-nos pezar, mando essas cartas suas pera que V. Excelencia as lea, porque tambem determino manda-las a S. Magestade per a que acabem de conhecer em Portugal que não ha nestos nem fe nem lealdade⁵⁸.

A week later Sousa Coutinho again accuses Jeronimo of deliberately exaggerating Dutch strength and advises Niza that whilst it was a good idea that the Portuguese garrisons in Brazil should be warned, Jeronimo's version of the situation would not be transmitted as it would serve only

⁵⁶ From 1646 he was in secret correspondence with the Conde de Peñaranda, the Spanish minister in charge of negotiations with the Dutch, see my forthcoming history of the Curiel family.

⁵⁷ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, ii. 270-271, 276-277.

⁵⁸ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, ii. 265-266: Sousa Coutinho to Niza, The Hague, 9 December 1647.

to demoralize the troops and make them believe 'que vae contra elles o poder do mundo'⁵⁹. Shortly after, the ambassador reported to Niza that the Dutch were facing mounting difficulties and that Jeronimo was deliberately concealing the truth from him:

A sua armada ainda esta destas partes, porque o vento não da lugar a fazer viagem; dizem que lhes morrem muitos nella de bexigas, mas esta nova não chegara a V. Excelencia por via de Jeronimo Nunes, assim como não chegou a da perda dos navios, no que me affirmo he que se fora em nosso odio e dano que elle a avizara por vias duplicadas⁶⁰.

Outraged and appalled by the immensity of the disaster in Brazil, Dutch Jewish opinion was particularly incensed by the treatment meted out by the Portuguese to Jews captured in Brazil. This issue attained great importance in the years 1646-1648 for not only did it arouse very strong emotions among Dutch Sephardi Jewry as a whole, it offered the *Mahamad* in Amsterdam a basis for political intervention with the city council of Amsterdam, States of Holland and States General to a greater extent than any other aspect of the Brazilian débâcle. It enabled Dutch Sephardi Jews to confirm their status as Dutch subjects, tighten the links between the community and the Dutch state, and present the Portuguese crown as the party which had broken faith. The question of the treatment of the Jewish prisoners captured in Brazil in 1645 thus became a major political controversy out of all proportion to the relatively small number of captives actually involved. Apart from the proselytizer Isaac de Castro Tartas who had been arrested at Bahia in December 1644 and shipped back to Lisbon where he was handed over to the Inquisition early in 1645, two Jews, one called Moseh Mendes, were caught by rebel forces north of Recife in the summer of 1645 and hanged on the spot, while a group of Jews, including several Ashkenazim, were captured at or near Fort Maurits, at the estuary of the São Francisco river, between Recife and Bahia and sent, via Bahia, to Portugal⁶¹. Of this group, four Ashkenazim and three Sephardi Jews born in Holland and never baptized were soon released⁶². However, several others who had been born and baptized in Portugal were held and tried by the Lisbon Inquisition.

The Amsterdam *Mahamad* lost no time in taking up the case of these captives, appealing to the Amsterdam city council, States of Holland and States General that Dutch subjects had been seized by the Portuguese

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 271: Sousa Coutinho to Niza, The Hague, 16 December 1647.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ii. 276-277: Sousa Coutinho to Niza, The Hague, 30 December 1647.

⁶¹ Wiznitzer, *Jews in Colonial Brazil*, p. 108.

⁶² *Ibid.*; the Ashkenazim are listed as Samuel Israel, David Michael de Alemagna, Jacob Polaco and Salaman bar Jacob.

authorities and handed over to the Inquisition in violation of article twenty-five of the Dutch-Portuguese Truce. Petitions signed by the *par-nasim* were lodged with the States General in October 1646, May and June 1647 and in January 1648⁶³. Each time the States General wrote to John IV demanding the immediate release of the captives. But more importantly, the *Mahamad* was able to use the episode to mobilize the full weight of Jewish opinion against Portugal and exert intense pressure on the Portuguese ambassador.

This build-up of the issue into a major political *cause célèbre* served to greatly heighten the impact of the news of the *Auto-da-fé* staged in Lisbon in December 1647. Isaac de Castro's death at the age of twenty-two at the hands of the Inquisition in full view of the Lisbon populace was, in any case, one of the most sensational instances of Jewish martyrdom of the entire seventeenth century. In the words of a French onlooker so unsympathetic to the victim's Jewish beliefs that he refers to "cette peste du Judaïsme", this remarkable young man who had lived in Portugal, France, Holland and Netherlands Brazil was

... brulé vif publiant et professant hautement la loy de Moyse qui possédait et parloit toutes sortes de langues ... persista tousjours en sa malheureuse créance jusques au dernier soupir criant a haute voix Ely, Adonay, Sabatot; jamais l'On n'a veu une telle resolution et constance ...⁶⁴.

But within the tense religio-political framework emanating from the Dutch-Portuguese confrontation over Brazil, and the mobilization of Dutch Sephardi opinion against Portugal – it is no accident that the *Mahamad* petitioned the States General from 1646 onwards in the name of the "gemeene Joodsche Natie" and not of the "Portuguese nation" of Amsterdam which in the past had been the customary terminology used by the Sephardi authorities when petitioning the States – the impact of Isaac de Castro's martyrdom, together with the penancing of three of the Jews captured on the São Francisco river, Abraham (Gabriel) Mendes, Samuel (João Nunes) Velho, and Abraham Bueno (Diogo Henriques)⁶⁵ at the same *Auto-da-fé*, was overwhelming.

Sousa Coutinho reported back to the king that unless one was in Holland, and witnessed it in person, one would not believe the strength of feeling and the general revulsion which the news aroused. He warned

⁶³ Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague SG 7011/i. petitions "representeert uyt den naem ende van wegen de gemeene Joodsche Natie residerende binnen Amsterdam gesecondeert met voorschryvens vande heeren burgemeesteren ende regeerders deselver stede", May and June 1647, and also the copy of the letter of the States General to John IV, The Hague, 10 October 1646.

⁶⁴ Wiznitzer, "Isaac de Castro, Brazilian Jewish Martyr", p. 74.

⁶⁵ Wiznitzer, *Jews in Colonial Brazil*, p. 108.

that a delegate of the Amsterdam *parnasim* had been sent to The Hague to foment the anger of the States of Holland and States General and that the episode was giving the Jews an undue influence on the moulding of Dutch-Portuguese relations:

... e não tem assoprado mal este fogo o que ahi so poz ao judeu prizioneiro da Bahia. He força, Senhor, dize-lo, porque não se pode crer a furia em que tem entrado os Estados, e a em que os mete hum procurador que nesta corte tem os judeus que a todas as horas lhe anda gritando nos ouvidos ...⁶⁶.

The ambassador explained to the king that the Jews constituted a "considerable" force in the United Provinces and that the present situation was enabling them to mobilize the States General against Portugal. He warned that in the aftermath of the agitation at Amsterdam and The Hague, a States General delegation had been sent to admonish him

... chegando-me a dizer que tinham feito paz com Castella, e que lhes ficavam as mãos livres para acodir por seos subditos aos quais se lhe faltara duas vezes com o direito das gentes; a primeira rendendo-se a partido na fortaleza de São Francisco, sem embargo de que forão levados a Portugal e ally metidos na Inquisição; e a segunda quebrando-se lhe o contrato da Tregoa no capitulo 25 que claramente querem que falle dos judeus, e que sem os nomear se faça delles expreça menção naquella particula que diz os subditos destas Provincias nascidos nellas ou em qualquer outra parte;⁶⁷.

Sousa Coutinho then went on to ask the king whether he was willing to risk war with the States General rather than free three Jews from the hands of the Inquisition.

The king instructed Sousa Coutinho to explain that the trials of the Jews were beyond his jurisdiction being an ecclesiastical matter. But just at this time a looming clash between the States General and the Spanish crown over four captured Dutch Jews in Spain who had been handed over to the Inquisition was settled by their being released. Reiterating his view that the episode was enabling the Jews to swing opinion in Holland against Portugal, Sousa Coutinho urged the king to follow the Spanish example. If reason of state had induced the Spanish king to compel his Inquisition to surrender four Jews to the Dutch why should not the king of Portugal act likewise⁶⁸?

But in the years 1645-1649 Dutch Sephardi Jewry did more than wage

⁶⁶ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, ii. 306: Sousa Coutinho to John IV, The Hague, 10 February 1648.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314: Sousa Coutinho to John IV, The Hague, 24 February 1648; conference between Sousa Coutinho and the States General delegation took place on 30 January 1648.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 296.

a propaganda war against Portugal: it literally went to war against the Portuguese. The dispatch of the fleet of December 1647 was by no means the only armed action taken against the Portuguese, even though Portugal and the United Provinces were not officially at war. The States of Zeeland obtained agreement of the States General to restart the privateering war against Portuguese shipping in the South Atlantic. This war, a tradition among the Zeelanders, had ceased with the signing of the Truce, in 1641 but before that, in the 1620s and 1630s the campaign had had some success, at times capturing as many as forty to sixty Portuguese ships per year. But this time the plan was to hit the Portuguese much harder, fit out more privateers than ever before and bring the Portuguese traffic with Brazil to its knees. The question was, though, how was this to be organized? The West India Company was now so weakened financially, and by the revolt in Brazil, that it was no longer able to participate in raiding activity⁶⁹. For this reason the States of Zeeland set up a special directorate in Middelburg to organize the massive privateering campaign that was now to be launched. Zeeland had no lack of hardened captains and seamen to man a large privateering fleet. The problem was to find enough financial backing for such a campaign; for this could not be done with local resources alone. On the whole, Christian merchants in Amsterdam and other Holland towns showed no interest in putting money into this venture. But the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam did and thus they came forward as a group at this juncture to form a privateering alliance with the Zeelanders against Portugal⁷⁰.

According to Sousa Coutinho, Amsterdam Jews were already negotiating with the Zeelanders before permission for the campaign was secured from the States General and were in on its planning from the outset. Reporting the attempts of the Middelburg directorate to find backing in Amsterdam during the spring of 1647, he wrote

a Amsterdam mandarão procura os que querião entrar, e não ouve framen-go nenhum que quizesse; jueus, sim, muitos, ou seja pelo amor que nos tem, ou porque são os mois empenhados em Pernambuco (Recife) . . . ⁷¹.

When the furore over the burning of Isaac de Castro and the penancing of three other Brazilian Jewish captives at Lisbon was at its height, in

⁶⁹ J.W. van Hoboken, "De West-Indische Compagnie en de vrede van Munster", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, lxx (1957), 361-362; the so-called "Brasilse directie tot Middelburg" was set up in December 1646, see Franz Binder, "Die Zeeländische Kaperfahrt, 1654-1662", *Archief uitgegeven door het Koninklijk zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen*, (1976), 41, 77.

⁷⁰ *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho*, ii. 53, 314.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 53: Sousa Coutinho to John IV, The Hague, 6 March 1647.

February 1648, Sousa Coutinho further reported to the king:

... sey que os judeus tratão com os de Zellanda para que por conta de huns e outros se armen fragatas para irem infestar os mares e costas desse reino, para o que ja pedem licença aos Estados, e se ainda a não tem a virão a ter, se Vossa Magestade não for servido de lhes mandar responder a sua satisfação⁷².

In the years 1647-1648, this privateering war organized by the *Brasilse directie* at Middelburg, and backed by Amsterdam Sephardi capital, had a devastating impact on the Portuguese traffic to Brazil. Nothing like it had been seen before. In the two years 1647-1648, the Zeelanders captured approximately 220 Portuguese ships sailing to and from Brazil, a majority of the vessels which attempted the voyage⁷³. In fact, in 1648 unescorted Portuguese navigation to Bahia and Rio de Janeiro collapsed. What saved the Portuguese traffic to Brazil was the setting up of the so-called "Brazil Company" at Lisbon in 1649, a joint-stock company based on New Christian capital designed to operate a heavily armed convoy system⁷⁴. As a result, from 1649 onwards, Portuguese shipping losses to the Zeeland privateers were cut to a mere handful⁷⁵. In setting up the Brazil Company, John IV, as is well known, made his one really substantial concession to the New Christians in the face of bitter opposition from the Inquisition: capital invested in the Brazil Company was declared to be wholly exempt from confiscation by the Inquisition even when belonging to sentenced judaizers⁷⁶. Thus the irony is that Dutch Sephardi hostility to Portugal in the years 1647-1648 had the unintended effect of gaining more for the New Christians than had Dutch Sephardi support for the Portuguese cause in the early 1640s. It was presumably on account of this major concession to the New Christians that Jeronimo da Costa's father, Duarte, at Hamburg decided to help procure large vessels suitable for conversion into warships, stores and supplies for the Company at a time when the Sephardi merchants in Amsterdam flatly refused to provide what was needed⁷⁷.

Dutch Sephardi Jewry's hopes that Netherlands Brazil could be saved and restored were finally dashed in the years 1649-1651. The troops that

⁷² *Ibid.*, ii. 314: Sousa Coutinho to John IV, The Hague, 24 February 1648.

⁷³ Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, pp. 280-290; Binder, "Die Zeeländische Kaperfahrt", pp. 41, 77.

⁷⁴ Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, pp. 208-211; the "Companhia Geral do Comercio do Brasil" was financed largely by New Christians, see C.A. Hanson, *Economy and Society in Baroque Portugal, 1668-1703* (Ann Arbor, 1981), pp. 178, 217.

⁷⁵ Cabral de Mello, *Olinda Restaurada*, pp. 83-84, 88, 92.

⁷⁶ Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, p. 212.

⁷⁷ Vieira, *Obras Escolhidas*, i. 100-105.

arrived with Withe de With, in 1648, proved insufficient to make the attempt on Bahia. The authorities in Recife then decided to throw what offensive power they had into an attempt to break the siege of Recife which culminated in the debacle of the first battle of Guararapes (April 1648) when the Dutch army of Brazil, some 4,500 men, was defeated by an inferior Portuguese force and driven back, with over 1,000 casualties, into Recife. This left the Portuguese free to surround Recife again and re-occupy Olinda. The last attempt to break out and gain the upper hand was launched in February 1649 and culminated in the second battle of Guararapes. Again the Dutch were beaten, this time more ignominiously and with heavier losses than before. With this hopes faded. Nevertheless, it was still expected in the Republic that Dutch Brazil could be saved, by means of either an all-out or a partial war against Portugal. But plans for an all-out war, or a blockade of Lisbon, met with stiff opposition in Amsterdam and at Hoorn which was the center for the importing of Portuguese salt, and no agreed strategy had yet emerged by 1651 when the Republic was dragged into its dangerous confrontation with England which led directly on to the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654). With this the fate of Recife was sealed and early in 1654, the garrison capitulated along with the other remaining Dutch forts in Brazil to the Portuguese.

The collapse of Dutch Brazil was a crushing blow to Dutch Sephardi Jewry, indeed to all western Sephardi Jewry, and by no means only in an economic sense. Brazil had appeared to be the land of promise, the land on which western Sephardi Jewry's future prospects rested. Only in Brazil, or so it seemed, was there room for Jewish settlement on an unlimited scale and a guarantee of terms more favorable than existed, or were likely to be obtained, anywhere else in the world. And if the privileges and rights conceded by the West India Company to the Jews in Brazil were already the most liberal available anywhere before 1645, in the aftermath of the planters' revolt, in 1645, the States General, at the prompting of the Amsterdam *Mahamad*, directed the West India Company to reward the loyalty the Jews were showing by proffering to them every favor and protection and not discriminating against them in favor of Christians in any sphere of administration, taxation or commerce⁷⁸. In fact in Netherlands Brazil, albeit as a result of a great crisis, the Jews were effectively granted equality of status and opportunity with Christians, a unique phenomenon, needless to say, in that age.

The Dutch-Portuguese truce of 1641 which had raised so many hopes, and which seemed to guarantee a secure and flourishing future for western Sephardi Jewry had, in the end, undermined and shattered all such

⁷⁸ Wiznitzer, *Jews in Colonial Brazil*, p. 100.

expectations. The inevitable result was a major shift in the political outlook of Dutch Sephardi Jewry. To proclaim an enthusiastic loyalty to Portugal as well as to the United Provinces as Menasseh ben Israel had done in 1641 was now inconceivable. The community at Amsterdam no longer wanted to be known as the "Portuguese nation" but as the "Jewish nation" of Amsterdam. The planters' revolt of 1645 had meant a parting of the ways politically between the Jews of the Republic and the New Christians of Portugal and Brazil. But the shift in Dutch Sephardi allegiance was not just a matter of political realism and a tightening of links with the Dutch state. The idea of a political restoration of the Jews so vividly lodged in Sephardi minds as a result of the stirring events of the 1640s could not, once aroused, be simply packed away and discarded on the shattering of prospects for Brazil. The likelihood was that so intoxicating a notion would continue to permeate the western Sephardi world. Can it be mere coincidence, for example, that the year of the second battle of Guarapares which effectively aborted the Dutch counter-offensive in Brazil was also the year of Menasseh ben Israel's *Esperança de Israel*? The message of Menasseh's *Esperança* surely was that the political restoration of Israel was, after all, close at hand. The book is a retreat from active hopes based on current political actuality to no less urgent political expectations of a mystical character based on signs and symbols which, he believed, pointed to the fulfillment of a spiritual process. One of the key signs to which Menasseh points are the several recent Jewish martyrdoms including that of Isaac de Castro, the Jew from Dutch Brazil burnt alive in Lisbon⁷⁹. The burning of Isaac de Castro aroused more emotion among western Sephardim than any comparable event of the age. It became a symbol of the destruction of Jewish hopes in Portugal's restoration. But Menasseh urged his contemporaries to find also in this terrible event consolation and a token of divine promise. Isaac de Castro's inspiring heroicism, according to Menasseh, was a God-given sign that "our redemption" is now very near.

⁷⁹ Menasseh ben Israel, *Mikveh Israel. Esto es, Esperança de Israel* (Amsterdam, 1650), pp. 99-100.

WHY WAS BARUCH DE SPINOZA EXCOMMUNICATED?*

ASA KASHER and SHLOMO BIDERMAN

I

On the sixth of the month of *Av*, 5416, 27 July 1656, the excommunication of Baruch de Spinoza was proclaimed from the Ark in the synagogue of *Talmud Torah*, the united congregation of the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam. The complete version of the proclamation, written in Portuguese, is found in the Book of Ordinances of the congregation (*Livro dos Acordos de Nação e Ascamos*)¹ and it includes some highly interesting details:

“The Lords of the *Ma'amad*”, i.e., the governing body of six *parnassim* and the *gabbai*, announce that

having long known of the evil opinions and acts of Baruch de Spinoza, they have endeavored by various means and promises, to turn him from his evil ways. But having failed to make him mend his wicked ways, and, on the contrary, daily receiving more and more serious information about the abominable heresies which he practiced and taught and about his monstrous deeds, and having for this numerous trustworthy witnesses who have deposed and born witness to this effect in the presence of the said Espinoza, they became convinced of the truth of this matter; and after all of this has been investigated in the presence of the honorable *hakhamim*, they have decided, with their consent, that the said Espinoza should be excommunicated and expelled from the people of Israel . . . ².

* Previous, quite different versions of this paper were used on various occasions since 1977, the tricentennial anniversary of Spinoza's death. During those years the authors benefited from comments made by colleagues and friends. Yosef Kaplan has been particularly helpful. Richard Popkin has constantly inspired our work, by showing us why philosophers should and how they could do historical work. The present (version of this) paper is dedicated to him, though we do not take it for granted that he is going to accept our conclusions. As usual, we look forward to hearing from him about his new discoveries, on the grounds of which we may well find ourselves writing yet another version of this paper.

¹ The official version of the excommunication appears on page 408 of the Book of Ordinances (*Livro dos Acordos de Nação e Ascamos*), henceforth: *Ascamos* (both volume A, which we leave unmarked, and volume B). The book is in the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam, and is numbered PA 334/19.

² The English translation of this part of the proclamation, in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971) entry on Spinoza (xv. 275-282), is different from ours, twice quite significantly so (p. 276), but we will not presently go into the details.

The “*hakamim*”, namely the official rabbis of the community, with whose consent the resolution was made to excommunicate the “said Espinoza”, were familiar with the traditional wording of the proclamations of excommunication and excerpts of these conventional formulations were incorporated in the announcement of Spinoza’s excommunication:

By decree of the angels and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse and damn Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of God, Blessed be He, and with the consent of the entire holy congregation, and in front of these holy scrolls with the 613 precepts which are written therein; cursing him with the excommunication with which Joshua banned Jericho and with the curse which Elisha cursed the boys and with all the castigations which are written in the Book of the Law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law. But you that cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day³.

The proclamation of the excommunication concludes with the following famous lines of the actual warning:

That no one should communicate with him, neither in writing, nor accord him any favor nor stay with him under the same roof nor within four cubits in his vicinity; nor shall he read any treatise composed or written by him.

II

What were the views, the “abominable heresies”, that Baruch de Spinoza maintained in those days, just a few months before he reached the age of 24? How did the governing council try to “reform him from his evil

³ Translations of Spinoza’s excommunication proclamation abound, but they are often quite inaccurate. Consider, for example, the phrase from the words “the Lord will not” to the words “in this book of the law”. Those are two verses from the book of Deuteronomy (29:19-20) and they appear in traditional wordings of the excommunication, e.g., in the book *Kol Bo*, the famous late-thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century collection of laws. Although the latter book was available to Jacob Klatzkin, when he was writing his book, *Baruch Spinoza* (in 1923), he translated the proclamation of Spinoza’s excommunication by using an inaccurate paraphrase. Apparently he did not notice that this is the exact wording of these verses. To this very day, such unsuccessful paraphrases keep cropping out, from time to time, in the accounts of the excommunication of Spinoza.

ways''? What were they willing to promise him? To whom did he teach his views? Who were the witnesses that were considered trustworthy? Why did they testify and what was Spinoza's response to their testimonies? What treatise, if any, had already been "composed or written by him" and was banned so that reading it became punishable by excommunication? What was the source of the curses used in the excommunication proclamation? Why was a harsh wording of excommunication used, rather than a milder one?

For almost all of these questions, which emerge from the particular phrasing of Spinoza's excommunication, no answer is to be found in any primary source. We have at our disposal, for instance, the dossiers of written statements and letters concerning the views and deeds of two of Spinoza's acquaintances, Daniel de Prado and Daniel Ribera⁴, but no such dossier has been found about the case of Spinoza. Various works that Spinoza wrote in the course of his life are known in full, but there has not been found any complete treatise which was written before the excommunication. We are soon going to refer to several answers gleaned from secondary sources.

III

An exception of sorts is the question of the wording used in the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication. It is now plausible to assume that though the text used in Spinoza's case was not extraordinary, the circumstances of its use indeed were. The Hebrew original of the core of the text was well-known⁵ and its Spanish translation was brought to Amsterdam from Venice, in 1618, that is to say, before Spinoza was even born⁶. On the other hand, the circumstances of putting this text to use must have been of particular importance. There is no other case in which we know the same text was used during the same period⁷ and there is just one additional case in which that text is known to be used, during a later pe-

⁴ I.S. Revah, "Aux origines de la rupture spinozienne: Nouveaux documents sur l'incroyance dans la communauté Judéo-Portugaise d'Amsterdam à l'époque de l'excommunication de Spinoza", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, cxxiii (1964), 359-431. Prado's dossier is on pp. 391-401 and Ribera's on pp. 402-408.

⁵ It appears in the collection *Kol Bo* (our note 3). The proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication uses, strictly speaking, an abridged form of the *Kol Bo* version.

⁶ See H.P. Salomon, "Le vrai excommunication de Spinoza", in *Forum Literarum*, ed. H. Bots and M. Kerkhof (Amsterdam/Maarsen, 1984), pp. 181-199. See also R. Melnick, *From Polemics to Apologetics: Jewish-Christian Rapprochement in the 17th Century* (Amsterdam/Assen, 1981), pp. 57-58.

⁷ See, for instance, the proclamation of Juan de Prado's excommunication, *Ascamot*, pp. 427-428. See also Yosef Kaplan, "The Social Functions of the *herem* in the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century", *Dutch Jewish History*,

riod, namely against three alleged Karaites, in 1712⁸. Interestingly enough, the latter case also involved heretical views.

IV

Upon second thought, further questions arise. For instance, the entry of the excommunication in the *Ascamot* is not signed, while analogous records used to be signed by the congregational officers (*gabba'im*). Thus, for instance, Abraham Telles's signature appears at the bottom of an entry concerning the subsequent excommunication of the same Daniel de Prado⁹, and the signature of Jacob Belmonte appears at the conclusion of the entry concerning the ban on the Sabbataian book *Ketz Hayyamin*¹⁰. Was there a special reason for this discrepancy¹¹?

V

Moreover, although the entry about Spinoza's excommunication concludes the records of that year, its date (the sixth of *Av*) is earlier than that of the resolution recorded in the preceding entry. The latter is dated the second of *Elul* and is signed by all the *parnassim* and the *gabbai* Isaac Israel Suasso. Is there any significance to this fact?

The key to this intriguing sequence of the entries lies in an interesting detail which many people overlooked. David Franco Mendes, who in the second half of the eighteenth century wrote the history of the settlement of the Jews from Portugal and Spain in Amsterdam, describes the case of Spinoza¹² and argues that the public ceremony of the excommunication was not held until the twenty-second of *Elul* 5416¹³! Just as an excommunication was not usually the first formal step taken by a community but was preceded by a lighter measure of expulsion (*niddui*), so,

i (1984), 111-155 (henceforth: Y. Kaplan, *Herem*), esp. p. 140. On the relation between the wording used in Uriel da Costa's 1618 excommunication and the one used in Spinoza's case, see Salomon, *op. cit.*

⁸ See Yosef Kaplan, in this volume.

⁹ *Ascamot*, p. 427. The text of the excommunication can be found in I.S. Revah, *Spinoza et le Dr. Juan de Prado* (Paris, 1959), pp. 58-60.

¹⁰ *Ascamot*, p. 557. See also Yosef Kaplan, "The Attitude of the Leaders of the Portuguese Community to the Sabbataian Movement", *Zion* 39 (1974), 204-205 (Hebrew).

¹¹ By mistake, the above-mentioned "Spinoza" entry of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* says that the proclamation was "signed by Saul Levi Morteira and others".

¹² His book was published by L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld in *Studia Rosenthaliana*, ix (1975).

¹³ We have dealt with this issue elsewhere. See, Asa Kasher and Shlomo Biderman, "When Was Spinoza Banned?", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, xii (1978), 108-110.

apparently, neither did it have to be the final formal step taken by a community. It could be followed by the most severe measure, sometimes called *shamta*. At the intermediate stage of the excommunication, the *herem*, it is still possible for the transgressor to mend his evil ways. Even if he somewhat tarries, the community waits for him to confess and forsake his transgressions so that he might obtain mercy. Only when there is no further hope, the public ceremony of the absolute severance is held. It seems, then, reasonable to assume that the community waited for Baruch de Spinoza's retraction for over a month, and only then, when it despaired of him, the heads of the community ejected him from the community and noted this down in the ordinance book of the congregation.

In this context, it is of special interest to mention a comment made by Johannes Colerus, one of the first biographers of Spinoza, who was his contemporary and knew many of his acquaintances. Thanks to the help of theologians and philologists of his time, he had an extensive knowledge of the Jewish procedures of excommunication. In reference to the excommunication of Spinoza he wrote that a certain "learned Jew" had confirmed that it was rather the *shamta* that was most applicable to the case of Spinoza¹⁴.

Why did the *ma'amad* decide not to wait any longer for Spinoza to retract his views? What happened during the six weeks between the sixth of *Av* and the twenty-second of *Elul*? These questions too have no answer in primary sources. Once again we have no choice but to make use of secondary sources, indirect evidence or plausible hypotheses in order to form a reasonable view of the crux of the matter.

¹⁴ John Colerus, *The Life of Benedict de Spinoza*, "Done Out of French" (London, 1706), p. 31. *Das Leben des Benedict von Spinoza*, ed. C. Gebhardt (Heidelberg, 1952) includes a German translation of this biography. Cf. H.J. Siebrand, *Spinoza and the Netherlands* (Assen/Maastricht, 1988), pp. 119-123.

Although it seems impossible to argue for a certain legal distinction between "*herem*" and "*shamta*" to be in existence in seventeenth-century Jewish life, one should notice that there had been a long tradition of understanding "*niddui*" as being practically different from "*herem*". In the Talmud (*Mo'ed Katan*, 15a) it is being said that "one put under *niddui* may teach and others may teach him; he may be hired and others may be hired by him. One put under *herem* neither teaches others, nor do others recite it for him; he is not hired, nor are others hired by him". See the entry "*herem*" in the *Talmudic Encyclopedia*, xvii (Jerusalem, 1983) (Hebrew), p. 325. (Additional material will appear in the entry "*niddui*".) For the history of this practical distinction in later periods, see S. Assaf, *Punishments in Post-Talmudic Periods* (Jerusalem, 1922) (Hebrew), pp. 32-34.

Colerus's report and our own explained observation of the different dates mentioned with respect to the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication should perhaps cast some doubt on the view that the formal distinctions between *niddui*, *herem* and *shamta* were not applied in practice. Cf. R. Bonfil, *Rabbinate in Renaissance Italy* (Jerusalem, 1979) (Hebrew), p. 45, note 130, and Y. Kaplan, *Herem*, p. 139, note 78.

VI

In this paper we shall deal primarily with the first question we have raised, namely – what were the views of Baruch de Spinoza in 1656, views that the *ma'amad* regarded as “abominable heresies”, so much so that, along with the consent of the *hakhamim*, they found them sufficiently weighty to justify excommunication? However, occasionally we shall also get close, though only to some extent and indirectly, to the answers for some other questions.

Right away we have to dismiss one simplistic answer. Quite a few persons labelled Spinoza, during his lifetime and soon after his death, as an “atheist” on the grounds of his renowned writings. This is how he is described, for instance, by Lambert van Velthuysen, one of Descartes’s disciples, in a letter addressed to Jacob Ostens, leader of the Collegiants of Rotterdam, who was in contact with Spinoza. This letter, dated 24 January 1674, is the forty-second in the standard collection of Spinoza’s correspondence. Later on, Spinoza was considered a “pantheist” because of the views expressed in the same works. However, these facts bear no relevance to our question. For surely the young Spinoza was not excommunicated for the works he was to compose later on in the course of his life. The answer to our question should be based on evidence directly related, as far as possible, to the views held by Spinoza precisely during the period of his excommunication.

VII

On 8 August 1659 the monk Tomas Solano y Robles submitted a detailed written report to the Inquisition, in Madrid, about his recent travels. The following day, a similar report was submitted to the law court of the Madrid Inquisition by Captain Miguel Perez de Maltranilla, who had been the monk’s fellow traveler. Brother Tomas testified that he had met “doctor Prado” as well as “a certain de Espinoza . . . who was a good philosopher (*buen filosofo*)”. They told him that they had “observed the Mosaic law” but the congregation (*Sinagoga*) had ejected them because they “reached the point of atheism”. The monk added that they had said that they were circumcised and observed the laws of the Jews (*la ley de los Judios*) but changed their mind “because they thought that the Law was not true, and that the soul dies along with the body and that God exists only philosophically, and therefore they were expelled from the synagogue”. The Captain too attended these meetings and according to him, these two had told him that they were Jews who observed the precepts and were moved away from religion and this was why they were excom-

municated. He added that the meetings had also been attended by two other Jews, apparently observant of the Jewish Law – they refused to taste some food that was offered to them. Spinoza and Prado, testified the Captain, “apparently embraced no religion”¹⁵.

The Law is not true; the soul dies along with the body; God exists only philosophically. At the time, were these “abominable heresies”? Do we have further evidence that Spinoza maintained these views during that period? And if, indeed, these views of Spinoza were “abominable heresies”, did they justify his excommunication from any *halakhic* point of view? Furthermore, could the *ma'amad* regard the adherence to these views as justifying excommunication? Let us try to answer these four questions.

There is no doubt that many regarded these three assertions as outright “heresies”. In this paper, we will refer only to the counter views expressed by those who functioned as the senior rabbis of the community at the time of the excommunication, namely Hakham Saul Levi Morteira and Hakham Isaac Aboab da Fonseca. In addition, we will cite the words of Hakham Menasseh ben Israel, another senior rabbi of the community at that period, who at the time of the excommunication was in England, trying to be granted a permit for Jewish resettlement there¹⁶. We turn now to a discussion of each of those three principles separately.

VIII

“The Law is not true”. Among those that “are cut off and perish, and for their great wickedness and sinfulness are condemned for ever and ever”, Maimonides lists (in *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah*, chapter 3) three types of “those who deny the Torah”, amongst them – “He who says that the Torah is not of divine origin, even if he says it of one verse, or of a single word. If he says that Moses said it of himself, he is a denier of the Torah; likewise he who denies its interpretation, that is, the oral law”.

¹⁵ See Revah's book (our note 9), pp. 61-68, and his article (our note 4). See also his articles, “Aux origines de la rupture spinozienne: nouvel examen des origines de déroulement et des conséquences de l'affaire Spinoza-Prado-Ribera”, *Annuaire de Collège de France*, lxx (1970), 562-568; lxxi (1971), 574-589; lxxii (1972), 641-653.

One may assume that Reiko Shimizu (“Excommunication and the Philosophy of Spinoza”, *Inquiry*, xxiii (1980), 327-348) was not aware of the existence of those reports, when he wrote that “there is no reliable record of anything done or said by Spinoza against the faith in his early life” (p. 331).

¹⁶ On Menasseh ben Israel's scholarly Jewish reputation, see Asa Kasher, “How Important Was Menasseh ben Israel?”, in *Menasseh ben Israel and His World*, ed. Y. Kaplan, H. Mechoulam and Richard H. Popkin (Leiden, 1989).

Indeed, Hakham Morteira accepted Maimonides's opinions and frequently cited them. In a letter addressed to Venice¹⁷, apparently written in 1635, he ascribes his ideas to "Maimonides, the leading spokesman¹⁸", and clarifies that while he was making a public sermon, he referred to "the established tradition accepted by the people of Israel, the *baraita*, which appears in the first chapter of *Rosh Ha-Shanah* [17a]: "But as for the heretics [*'minim'*] . . . and the scoffers [*'apikorosim'*, lit. Epicureans] who rejected the Torah and deny the resurrection of the dead . . . these will go down to Gehinnom and be punished there for all generations . . . Gehinnom will be consumed but they will not be consumed . . ." ¹⁹. In his homily on the *Thetzave* portion of the law, which is included in *Giv'at Sha'ul*, his collection of homilies, Morteira writes about "these thirteen Articles of Faith . . . For everybody agrees that these are the principles of Faith and he who denies them has no share in the world to come . . .". One of them is "the principle of the divine origin of the Torah. And it is suggested by the name 'Dan' for it teaches us that in His divine Torah, God gave human beings the laws [*'dinim'*] according to which they have to conduct themselves" ²⁰.

Hakham Aboab, in his book *Nishmat Hayyim*²¹, clearly supports the citations he incorporated from *Pardes Rimmonim*, written by kabbalist Moses Cordovero: "... Though they are not called '*koferim*' or '*'minim*' [heretics], since they believe in all matters of divinity, nonetheless they are called '*koferim*' because they deny the oral interpretation of the Law . . . as was written by Maimonides in the said chapter . . .". If this is what he thought about the oral interpretation of the Torah, all the more so that he held the same opinion about the Torah itself.

Hakham Menasseh ben Israel too, in a book entitled *Nishmat Hayyim*, takes this for granted, citing Maimonides: "The following have no portion in the world to come but are cut off and perish, and for their great wickedness and sinfulness are condemned for ever and ever. The Heretics [*'minim*' and '*apikorosim*'], those who deny the Torah, etc." ²².

¹⁷ A. Altmann, "Eternality of Punishment: A Theological Controversy within the Amsterdam Rabbinate in the Thirties of the Seventeenth Century", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, xl (1972), 1-88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

²⁰ Morteira, *Giv'at Sha'ul* (Amsterdam, 1645), portion *Thetzave*.

²¹ A. Altmann (our note 17), pp. 55-88.

²² Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Theshuvah*, ch. 3, para. 6. Maimonides refers to the first *mishnah* in *Sanhedrin*, ch. 11: "All Israel have a portion in the world to come . . . But the following have no portion therein: He who maintains that resurrection is not a Biblical doctrine, that the Torah was not divinely revealed, and an *epikoros*" (*Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*, ed. Epstein [London, 1969]).

IX

“The soul dies along with the body”. The question of the life of the soul after the death of the body was important to whoever believed that the full reward given to the righteous man for his good deeds and the full punishment inflicted on the wicked man for his evil deeds are not experienced in this world but are awaiting man in the world to come. As suggested by the testimonies of Solano and the Captain, Spinoza’s views implied a denial of the existence of reward and punishment after death since he argued that the soul dies with the body. Spinoza’s opinion on this issue might have reminded the elders of the congregation of Uriel da Costa who also had denied, among other things, the immortality of the soul and the principle of reward and punishment after death. However, we are not going to dwell here on the case of da Costa, his excommunication, and his repentance²³. What is noteworthy in this context is that in 1635, several years after da Costa was excommunicated for the second time, there emerged a heated dispute between Morteira and Aboab, the two most senior *hakhamim* of the community, concerning the issue of the eternity of punishment in the world to come, a debate that can be regarded as an offshoot of the controversy stirred by da Costa’s views.

Morteira, who had a Talmudic and a somewhat philosophical orientation, argued vehemently that “the perfectly wicked who died without repentance are condemned to eternal punishment”²⁴. In 1635 or 1636 Morteira formulated this opinion in a short treatise in which he discusses “the thesis that whoever is called by the name Israelite, even though he may have committed the gravest possible sins, will not suffer eternal punishment”²⁵. Considering this proposition a heresy, Morteira called those who denied the eternity of punishment persons “who claim to be proficient in the science of *kabbalah* . . . young men deficient in the faith . . . immature disciples”²⁶ (a possible allusion to Hakham Aboab, who was younger than him). Morteira produces the evidence to the eternity of punishment in the world to come mainly from the Talmud, the post-Talmudic literature, and from philosophical writings, with almost no substantiation from the literature of the *kabbalah* and mysticism. At the end of his treatise he states that the anti-eternalists requested the leaders of the community to forbid him to further express his views in his homilies.

²³ Richard Popkin has weighty arguments in favor of the claim that in the case of Uriel da Costa forgery exceeds reliable information. See his “Spinoza and La Peyrère”, *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, iii (1977), 172-195, esp. p. 177ff. and p. 191, note 2. See also Y. Kaplan, *Herem*, pp. 134-135 and 141-142.

²⁴ See Altmann (our note 17), p. 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 42, 50.

Aboab's position was put forth even more blatantly in his book *Nishmat Hayyim*. According to Aboab, punishment is not eternal but "as temporary as the gravity of sin"²⁷. He dismisses Morteira's view as a "castle in the air"²⁸, since it contradicts everything implied in the writings of the kabbalists. Aboab unleashes his tongue on Morteira and his followers, whom he critically portrays as follows: "Older than I am; whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock; and they are exceedingly wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and though I am younger in years, and they are older than I am, they become more foolish as they advance in years, for they have neither knowledge nor understanding"²⁹.

The sharp controversy raged in public. The leaders of the community requested the congregational, rabbinical court of the Venice community to settle the issue. In response, two of the Venice *hakhamim*, Shemaiah de Medina and Azariah Figo, wrote an emotional letter to Aboab, imploring him to abandon his view and accept Morteira's, thus obviating the need to submit this issue to the congregational court, whose verdict will undoubtedly favor "the party affirming the notion of eternal punishment"³⁰.

Did this letter calm down the agitated community? We have no direct evidence to this effect. However, in 1642 Isaac Aboab left the Portuguese community of Amsterdam and retired to one of the towns in Brazil. There he served as the *hakham* of the Jewish community. Perhaps his departure from the community resulted from this controversy. Later on, after a war between Portugal and Holland came to an end, he returned to Amsterdam and once again resumed his position as *hakham* there.

Since Morteira regarded as a "heresy" the notion that the punishment inflicted on the soul after the death of the body is only temporary, there is no doubt that he regarded as far more heretical the notion that the soul no longer exists after the death of the body. And Aboab, in his treatise *Nishmat Hayyim* says the following: "And even if it comes to mind that whatever I have explained may not be true, God forbid . . . none of those who believe in them is called a heretic [*'kofer'*] because this is not one of the required principles since the principle of reward and punishment does not entail the belief that the sinners are condemned to eternal punishment"³¹. Clearly, then, whoever does not believe in the principle of re-

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

ward and punishment, including anyone who denies the immortality of the soul, was regarded by Aboab as a heretic.

Menasseh ben Israel's book, *Nishmat Hayyim*, was published in Amsterdam about four years before Spinoza's excommunication. In the very introduction to this book, the author addresses the "friendly reader" as follows: "Know then that the very foundation and essential principle is this belief in the immortality of the soul", also because it is bound up with the other well-known principles of faith. Among other things, "out of this corner extend the four foundations . . . namely that God is cognizant of all of man's actions, that He rewards those who observe his precepts and punishes those who transgress them, that the Messiah will come and is destined to resurrect the dead . . ." ³².

Indeed, the main theological role of the belief in the immortality of the soul is to establish the foundation of reward and punishment not in this world – "For we have seen in this world that the righteous man suffers while the wicked man prospers" – but under different circumstances. Clearly, Menasseh ben Israel undertook the task of pursuing "the question most commonly raised by all the commentators of our nation . . . for why are the spiritual destination and the reward of the soul after death not mentioned in the Torah . . .". He intended, as he said, "to investigate and explore this belief as far as I can, so that every one will know that our Torah has nothing missing in it", and this "in spite of the fact that there is no nation and language in the land of the living which does not admit that the soul is spiritual and immortal . . . nor is there any one among us, thank God, who denies this principle . . ." ³³. By the time Menasseh ben Israel wrote the above, the case of Uriel da Costa had receded and that of Baruch de Spinoza and Daniel de Prado did not yet surface. At any rate, Menasseh ben Israel undoubtedly shared the opinion that denying the belief in the immortality of the soul was one of the "abominable heresies".

X

"God exists only philosophically". This assertion, which is not to be identified with the atheist assertion that "God does not exist", was considered a "heresy" in the theological framework of the notion of Providence. The philosophers' God is an abstract idea, such as the "primary cause" or the "supreme idea of the good", while the theologians' God is personal, an active being, a creator, ruler, and judge: "He preserves

³² Menasseh ben Israel, *Nishmat Hayyim* (Amsterdam, 1652), introduction.

³³ *Ibid.*

not the life of the wicked; but gives right to the poor; He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous; but with kings are they on the throne . . .”, to use a verse of the Book of Job. The idea that God is absent from the universe, does not direct all created beings nor watches over His people had to be considered by Hakham Morteira and Hakham Aboab as nothing but “an abominable heresy”. This position clearly emerges from their and Menasseh ben Israel’s writings.

Morteira found in the Torah thirteen verses in which the Hebrew word ‘*mitzva*’ (precept) does not indicate “a particular practical precept, but in a sense embraces all precepts, namely constitutes one of the principles on which the whole Torah is based”³⁴. He presented all of these verses in his homily on the *Ekev* portion of the Torah, which is included in his *Gi’vat Sha’ul*. In addition to the above-mentioned principles – “the divine origin of the Torah” and “the principle of reward and punishment” – Morteira also mentions “the principle of the providence of God, praised be He, over human ways, as we say [in the prayer book]: ‘He watcheth and knoweth our secret thoughts / He beholdeth the end of a thing before it exists’”. Yet the principle of Divine Providence refers not only to God’s general watching over people, for “the precept prescribing the belief in Providence is a particular and principal precept which includes all the precepts and from the observance of which God’s Providence will stem, that in which He will watch particularly over you, out of all the nations . . .”³⁵.

Aboab, a devoted kabbalist, to the extent of being willing to say, “we ought to praise the kabbalists, who possess the truth”³⁶, using the wording of the famous Jewish liturgy: “we ought to praise the Master of everything”, quotes from Moses Cordovero’s *Pardes Rimmonim*, part A, chapter 9³⁷, what he undoubtedly endorsed: “For the denial of the *sefirot*³⁸ will cause the individual to be led to heresy, since he must draw it from the assumptions and foundations of the Torah, for since the one, which is simple, does not change, how can He watch over transient matters”. It is the doctrine of the *sefirot* that makes it possible to shun from the denial that Divine Providence is concerned with the transient affairs of the world.

³⁴ Morteira, *Gi’vat Sha’ul*, portion *Ekev*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Altmann (our note 17), p. 88.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁸ Gershom Scholem defines *sefirot* in early *kabbalah* as the “ten stages of emanation that emerged from *Ein-Sof* [God as Absolute] and form the realm of God’s manifestations in His various attributes. Every single *sefirah* points to an aspect of God in his capacity as Creator, forming at the same time a whole world of divine light in the chain of being”. (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, xiv. 1104-1105).

Menasseh ben Israel too views the notion of Divine Providence as a clear component of the faith system. Thus, for instance, in the fourth chapter of *Nishmat Hayyim*, which deals with "the matter of the transmigration of souls", Menasseh ben Israel states simply: "and if there is God in the world, the latter must be governed by Divine Providence".

XI

It is noteworthy that at times, those *hakhamim* lump together these three principles – the truth of the Torah; the immortality of the soul, involving reward and punishment; and the existence of God, in a way which entails Divine Providence – and regard them as the absolute foundations of Faith. Thus, for instance, Menasseh ben Israel says in the very same book: "On this belief in the immortality of the soul depend, learned reader, the major foundations and the principles of religion, namely the existence of God, the divine origin of the Torah and reward and punishment. For if you say that the soul dies with the body, this precludes reward and punishment. And if there are no reward and punishment and Divine Providence, precluded is the existence of God. And if God does not exist and there is no reward and punishment, what is the purpose of the divine Torah and the toil of observing the precepts? Therefore, the threefold cord is not quickly broken . . .". Later in the book Menasseh ben Israel discusses the "utterly wicked and the grave transgressors who have wrought iniquity, such as the heretics [*apikorosim*'] who denied God, saying He does not exist, and those who deny the divinity of the Torah, reward and punishment and the immortality of the soul, thus living a life devoid of God and free of the yoke of Law"³⁹.

Similarly Morteira, in a homily on the *Mishpatim* portion, which appears in the same book of his, says that "Moses laid down his life for these particular things, which teach the essentials of our Torah . . . namely, the existence of God, the divinity of the Torah, and reward and punishment"⁴⁰.

Obviously, designating these three concepts as the principles of the Jewish faith is not the original contribution of the Amsterdam *hakhamim*. Surely they were inspired by Joseph Albo's Book of Principles and perhaps by earlier sources as well. At any rate, the views Spinoza expressed to the monk and the Captain were such as were viewed by the *hakhamim*

³⁹ *Op. cit.* (our note 32), ch. 4, para. 4.

⁴⁰ Morteira, *Giv'at Sha'ul*, portion *Mishpatim*.

of the community to be in sharp contrast to the three principles of faith and consequently well deserving of the label “horrible heresies”⁴¹.

XII

Although Baruch de Spinoza’s views were considered “heresy” by Hakham Morteira and Hakham Aboab, it should be borne in mind that the excommunication of Spinoza was not enforced by them but rather decreed “with their consent”. Moreover, it seems that the “Lords of the *Ma’amad*” had their own considerations concerning this matter. Before going into these considerations, we have to answer a second natural question – is there any further evidence suggesting that Spinoza actually subscribed to these views at the time when he was excommunicated?

Let us mention here some indirect testimonies concerning Spinoza’s views at that time.

One such testimony is to be found in the first biography of Spinoza, written by Lucas, his contemporary⁴². This biography was published in 1719, that is to say, over 40 years after Spinoza’s death, and is considered to be not entirely reliable. However, it is noteworthy that in accounting for the reasons for the excommunication, apparently on the basis of the philosopher’s memoirs, Lucas cites the same views of Spinoza against the truth of the Torah and the immortality of the soul as well as his claim that there is no basis in the Torah for negating the corporeality of God.

There are various pieces of evidence suggesting that close to the time of his excommunication, Spinoza himself wrote a treatise in which he explicitly expressed his attitude to the Torah and the Jewish religion. Salomon van Til, professor of theology at the University of Utrecht, was the first to testify, as early as 1684, about “a treatise against the old testament written in Spanish and entitled ‘Apologetics of his Departure from Judaism’”⁴³. According to Van Til, Spinoza did not publish this treatise, but presented the same ideas “more orderly” in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which he published anonymously in 1670. This work of Spinoza is extinct and we can only speculate which chapters of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* incorporate excerpts from it. It is reasonable

⁴¹ The radical nature of those “horrible heresies” should perhaps be stressed. They involved more than “expression of criticism of traditional and established Judaism”, namely denials of what was deemed utterly fundamental by both the Jews and their Christian neighbors. This suggests the need to somewhat revise Yosef Kaplan’s taxonomy of acts of transgression and ensuing acts of excommunication, in his “The Transformation of Jewish Society in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries”, forthcoming, section V.

⁴² See J. Freudenthal, *Die Lebensgeschichte Spinoza’s* (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 3-24.

⁴³ See Revah’s book (our note 9), p. 40.

to assume that chapter XIV, "Definitions of faith, the faith, and the foundations of faith, which is once for all separated from philosophy", is one of these excerpts. The following sentences may be considered typical to what appeared in Spinoza's lost work: "We will not . . . accuse the sectaries of impiety because they have adapted the words of Scripture to their own opinions . . . but we do accuse those who will not grant this freedom to their fellows, but who persecute all who differ from them, as God's enemies, however honorable and virtuous be their lives; while, on the other hand, they cherish those who agree with them, however foolish they may be, as God's elect"⁴⁴. After enumerating "the dogmas of universal faith"⁴⁵, which include nothing about the truth of the Torah, the principle of reward and punishment and the principle of Divine Providence, Spinoza lists views by which "faith is not affected": "But as to what God . . . may be . . . whether fire, or spirit, or light, or thought, or what not, this, I say, has nothing to do with faith. . . . Everyone may think on such questions as he likes. Furthermore, faith is not affected, whether we hold that God is omnipresent essentially or potentially; that He directs all things by absolute fiat, or by the necessity of His nature; that He dictates laws like a prince, or that he sets them forth as eternal truths [L]astly, that the reward of the good and the punishment of the wicked is natural or supernatural . . ."⁴⁶.

Thus, what was considered by the *hakhamim* and the *ma'amad* as "abominable heresies" was for Spinoza not part of the principles of faith but rather what is subject to free interpretation: "I will go further, and maintain that every man is bound to adapt these dogmas to his own way of thinking, and to interpret them according as he feels that he can give them his fullest and most unhesitating assent, so that he may the more easily obey God with his whole heart"⁴⁷.

Spinoza was, however, aware of the fact that his views had been taken by many to constitute explicit blasphemy. In a 1665 letter to Oldenburg (the thirtieth in the standard collection of Spinoza's correspondence) he states his "reasons" for "writing a Treatise about my interpretation of Scripture": "1. The prejudices of the Theologians; for I know that these are among the chief obstacles which prevent men from directing their mind to philosophy . . . ; 2. The opinion which the common people have of me, who do not cease to accuse me falsely of atheism; . . . 3. The free-

⁴⁴ Used here is R.H.M. Elwes's English translation of the Latin *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), as published in 1883. In the Dover 1951 republication, the sentences we quoted are on pp. 182-183.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186f.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

dom of philosophizing, and of saying what we think; this I desire to vindicate in every way, for here it is always suppressed through the excessive authority and impudence of the preachers''⁴⁸.

XIII

Some further details can be gleaned from the available material on the analogous case of the excommunication of Daniel de Prado. As already mentioned, Brother Tomas Solano y Robles and Captain Miguel Perez de Maltranilla testified that they had met Prado as well as Spinoza. The text of their testimonies suggests that the witnesses met Prado and Spinoza together. According to these testimonies, the reasons for their excommunication by the community equally apply to both of them.

Many documents concerning the excommunication of Prado in 1658 have not disappeared. If it is reasonable to assume that at the same period Spinoza and Prado shared their views, at least as far as the principles of faith are concerned, we can also infer from these documents about Spinoza's views during the period of his excommunication. In a letter written (in Latin) by Daniel de Prado, intended to prove that his excommunication was unjustified, he argues that he defended the belief in the creation of the world while he served as a reader, having to formally evaluate a certain dissertation submitted to the University of Leiden. In this defense, written five months following his excommunication, one can perceive an indirect estrangement from the view that God exists only philosophically. Even concerning the issue of reward and punishment awaiting a person after one's death, Prado argues that this idea has to be accepted as a principle of faith, even though it cannot be firmly substantiated. This assertion can be viewed as an indirect repudiation of the rejection of the principle of the immortality of the soul.

It seems that at the same time that Daniel de Prado sent this letter, his son, David de Prado, sent a letter to the *ma'amad* requesting them to let his father prove "that he did not sin against the Lord's holy law, which he obeys . . . and so that it will be demonstrated that he did not relapse even in thought from the straight way of the truth of the holy law, which

⁴⁸ Used here is A. Wolf's translation, as published in his edition of the correspondence, 1928, p. 206. Notice that reason 2, related to false accusation of atheism, seems to be inconsistent with the report we mentioned of the Spanish monk and Captain, according to which Prado and Spinoza had said they were excommunicated because "they reached the point of atheism". There are at least two possible explanations of this seeming inconsistency. First, that the latter description of their views is due to the "reporters", not to Spinoza or Prado themselves. Secondly, the letter Spinoza wrote to Oldenburg in 1665 reflected his views and predicament at the time, which could be different from those expressed by Prado or Spinoza more than six years earlier.

he obeys''. This rounds off the picture by adding another factor: an unequivocal disavowal of the rejection of the truth of the Torah.

Even if one might doubt the sincerity of the claims made by Daniel and David de Prado in view of what Spinoza and Daniel de Prado said to the monk and the Captain several months later, these excerpts clearly suggest that at the time when Spinoza and Daniel de Prado were excommunicated, the community was concerned about their attitude to these three principles of faith.

Similar evidence appears in a letter written in 1663 by Isaac Orobio de Castro, a member of the same community, in response to a missive by Prado. Entitled "*A Grave Letter Against Prado, A Philosopher-Physician Who Doubted, Or Did Not Believe in, the Truth of the Scriptures And Tried to Conceal His Wickedness by Arguing That He Believed in God And the Natural Law*", it includes a thorough discussion of the issue of the immortality of the soul⁴⁹.

Also available to us are documents concerning the testimonies of some of Prado's disciples in that period. The most interesting testimony is that of Jacob Monsanto, dated the beginning of 1658: "On Monday evening, before the class started, while he was talking with me, he said, among other things: 'What reason do we have to believe in Moses's Law more than in the teachings of other sects?' . . . Then, after he asked me whether there are reward and punishment, I answered him: 'Is it possible to doubt this?' Does he not know that this is one of the thirteen Articles [of Faith]? To which he responded conceitedly that so far, no one has returned from the next world. . . . He also asserted that the world had not been created but rather had always existed in the same way . . ." ⁵⁰, i.e., that God did not create the universe the way it is described in the biblical story of creation.

Once again, we are back to the same three principles of faith, ones which Daniel de Prado denied, to the chagrin of the *hakhamim*.

A similar picture emerges from the testimonies of the disciples of Daniel Ribera, a Christian monk who joined the same community and apparently taught together with Daniel de Prado. One of his pupils testifies before the *ma'amad* that Ribera confided in him that in his opinion, "The soul dies together with the body"; "The holy Torah is distorted". He added that the claim about the "divine individual and universal Providence" is unacceptable⁵¹.

⁴⁹ For the details, see Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Life and Work of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Jerusalem, 1982) (Hebrew, but now published in English by Oxford University Press).

⁵⁰ Revah (1964) (our note 4), pp. 394-395.

⁵¹ See Yosef Kaplan's *From Christianity to Judaism* (our note 49), p. 282. All the docu-

Finally, let us mention Abraham Israel Pereyra, of the same time and place, who in 1666 wrote harsh words about the world, "which is nothing but arid land, full of thorns and thistles [in the original version – *espinas*]; a green pasture [in the original version – *prado*] swarming with poisonous snakes". Just like others who wrote against Baruch de Spinoza and Daniel de Prado, Pereyra too made use of the above puns to fiercely attack the views ascribed to Spinoza and Prado. In a book he wrote in 1671, he launched a frontal attack on those Jews "who teach how to govern, as if the hand of Providence does not reach them and the universe simply directs itself" and who, following Machiavelli, "deny the immortality of the soul as well as reward and punishment"⁵².

XIV

In order to answer another natural question – whether Spinoza's views justified his excommunication from a *halakhic* point of view – we have to briefly consider a prevalent popular view that Jews have never been excommunicated for their views. What follows from this view is that Spinoza was excommunicated not on the basis of his "heretic" views but rather because of his conduct: he had infuriated the *hakhamim* and the *ma'amad* of his community by violating the precepts of the Torah in public. This point was argued by Freudenthal, Klatzkin and others⁵³:

Is it true, then, that Spinoza was excommunicated because of his public transgression of some precepts? It seems to us that the burden of proof rests on those who argue along these lines. Except for some obscure phrases in the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication ("evil . . . deeds", "evil ways" and "monstrous deeds") that obviously lend themselves to more than one interpretation, this view is not supported by the testimonies which are at our disposal. On the contrary, according to the testimony of the monk and the Captain, Spinoza and Prado said that their excommunication resulted only from their denial of the three principles of faith: they had "observed the Mosaic law" but the congregation had ejected them because they "reached the point of atheism".

Another indirect proof can be found in Spinoza's own words, in the Preface to his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*: "Wholly repugnant to the general freedom are such devices as enthralling men's minds with prejudices, forcing their judgment, or employing any of the weapons of

ments which were produced during the inquest held against Prado and Ribera can be found in the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam (number PA 334/882).

⁵² This account is based on Kaplan, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-283.

⁵³ See: J. Freudenthal, *op. cit.* (our note 42); Hebrew edn. (Vilna, 1909), p. 48; J. Klatzkin (our note 3), 3rd edn. (Tel-Aviv, 1954), p. 158, note 11.

quasi-religious sedition; indeed, such seditions only spring up, when law enters the domain of speculative thought, and opinions are put on trial and condemned on the same footing as crimes, while those who defend and follow them are sacrificed, not to public safety, but to their opponents' hatred and cruelty. If deeds only could be made the grounds of criminal charges, and words were always allowed to pass free, such seditions would be divested of every semblance of justification, and would be separated from mere controversies by a hard and fast line"⁵⁴.

XV

The notion that it was Spinoza's deeds, rather than his views, which provoked his excommunication is sometimes taken to be inferred from the general assumption that "Judaism does not excommunicate for views but rather for conduct". This assumption has no real basis, unless by "views" one means thoughts that man harbors without revealing them to anybody. There is a list of twenty-four offenses for which a ban is placed on the individual. It stems from the Talmud⁵⁵ and is then fully specified in the code of Maimonides⁵⁶ and in the later, *Shulhan Arukh* code⁵⁷. This traditional list includes different kinds of sins, from practical transgression such as those of "whoever does manual labor on the eve of Passover after midday" or "whoever causes the blind to stumble", and up to transgressions that consist in expressing a particular opinion, such as the one expressed by "whoever slights any ordinance instituted by the Scribes, or, needless to add, any precept of the Torah". To this example, eminent authorities added every case in which the individual goes against the general consensus of the majority because by doing so he behaves as if he violates the precepts of the Torah, thus blaspheming the name of God. When this happens, it is possible to excommunicate the transgressor at once, even without first resorting to the initial measures of warning, reprimand, and expulsion from the community (*niddui*)⁵⁸.

Hence it is clear that from a *halakhic* point of view, it was possible to excommunicate a person for expressing particular views in public, pro-

⁵⁴ Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (our note 44), Preface.

⁵⁵ *Berakhot*, 19a, where the list is not specified. A comment is made to the effect that there are 24 references to the power to excommunicate for a certain reason. The ensuing discussion mentions just a few of the references.

⁵⁶ *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Talmud Torah*, 6:14.

⁵⁷ *Yoreh De'ah*, 334.

⁵⁸ In this context we were assisted by the material at the disposal of the Talmudic Encyclopedia editorial board, even before the entry "*herem*" was printed. We thank the editors for letting us see the material. See also Kaplan, *Herem*, p. 115.

vided that this expression resulted in disputes, blasphemy, or slighting the written or oral law. Furthermore, these *halakhic* possibilities were not considered to fall under the category of "lawful but inadvisable". We know of excommunications imposed under such circumstances during the Sabbataian period, in the course of the ensuing Emden-Eybeschuetz controversy, and so forth.

Less known is the ban imposed by some rabbis not on expressing views, but on a serious study of books expressing particular views. Some rabbis (such as R. Asher ben Jehiel, a thirteenth-fourteenth-centuries authority, called "Rosh") entirely prohibited the study of philosophy, while others (R. Solomon ben Abraham Aderet, an authority of the same period, called "Rashba") prohibited only the young from doing so but reinforced the prohibition by the threat of excommunication⁵⁹. The *Shulhan Arukh* code takes an approach which is conditional on the one hand but very strict on the other hand: "A scholar who studies the books of the *Apikorosim* [lit. Epicureans, i.e., heretics] thus blaspheming the name of God, shall be placed under the *shamta*"⁶⁰. This opinion is shared by R. Joel Sirkes (1561-1640, almost a contemporary of Spinoza and author of *Bayit Hadash*, called "Bah") who looked down upon the kind of philosophy studied by their contemporary, the physician Joseph Abarbanel Barboza, considering it "heresy itself"⁶¹.

The senior *hakham* of the community, Saul Levi Morteira, knew all of this perfectly well. In *Giv'at Sha'ul*, his book of homilies, while discussing, in the context of the *Ki Thetze* portion, the punishment of the instigator, the stubborn and rebellious son, the elder who disregards the verdict of the supreme court of law and the false witnesses, he states that "... what this suggests to us is that since a thought is the act of the soul and a deed is the act of the body, the sin must be graver when it concerns the more precious and important part ... though this is not viewed as such by the masses, because they judge by appearance and are concerned with the deed and not with the thought, and do not watch for the latter ... And therefore it must be said that concerning these four matters, God commanded to make them known in public so that the observant shall hear them and fear, for they have all died for their thoughts and not for their deeds, and for what they were willing to do rather than for what they have actually done ...".

If heretic thoughts are graver than sinful acts, one should not wonder

⁵⁹ Rashba, *Responsa* (Livorno 1755), i. 414-418 (Hebrew); see also A.S. Halkin, "The Ban on the Study of Philosophy" (Hebrew), *P'raqim, Yearbook of the Schocken Institute for Jewish Research of the JTS of America*, ed. E.S. Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1967-1968), i. 35-56.

⁶⁰ *Yoreh De'ah*, 334.

⁶¹ *Old Bayit Hadash Responsa* (Ostrog, Arzenberg, 1834), res. V (Hebrew).

about Hakham Morteira's willingness to apply the strong sanction of excommunication against Baruch de Spinoza with regard to those "abominable heresies"⁶².

XVI

As already mentioned, the excommunication of Spinoza was not enforced by the rabbis but was rather decreed "with their consent". The body that actually imposed the excommunication was the *ma'amad* – the governing council of the community. Did the *ma'amad* have the authority to impose an excommunication? An answer to this question must address three different aspects of the authority of the *ma'amad* – the *halakhic* authority, the institutional authority within the community and the civil authority as granted by city authorities.

According to one of the popular unwarranted notions, the only body which is authorized, from a *halakhic* point of view, to impose excommunication is a rabbinical court of law, consisting of three rabbis. In sharp contrast to this notion, the *halakha* also recognizes another institutional body, which has a constitutive position – the aldermen ("tovei ha'ir"), or the heads of the congregation ("rashei ha-kahal"), or the officers ("par-nassim"). The *halakhic* authority of the congregation, or its leaders, to enact binding regulations is based on a verse in the book of Ezra which says: "And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away" (10:8).

In accordance with this, R. Gershom (a tenth-eleventh centuries high authority, called "*Me'or Ha-Golah*", lit. "Light of the Exile") ruled that "even the most despised individual, once he is appointed the chief leader of the community, he is to be looked upon as a mighty person. Therefore as far as the congregations are concerned, their decree is valid and their deeds carry weight". Thus, congregational regulations had been given an unequivocal *halakhic* status⁶³.

The authority of the communities encompassed both civil and criminal

⁶² In this paper we are not going to circumscribe what the members of the *ma'amad* or the *hakhamim* consider at the time to be practical vices. An illuminating case, which shows how difficult it would be to carry out such a delimitation, is that of their attitudes towards the Askhenazim (*tudescos*), or at least quite a number of them, whose "... vices, [were] alien to morality and ways" of Judaism. See: Y. Kaplan, "The Attitude of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews towards Ashkenazi Jews in Amsterdam in the XVIIth Century", in *Changes in Modern Jewish History* (Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 389-412 (Hebrew).

⁶³ See H. Méchoulán, "Le herem à Amsterdam et l'excommunication de Spinoza", *Cahiers Spinoza*, iii (1979/80), 117-134, esp. pp. 119ff. and 130ff.

matters, including all sorts of punishments – lashing, fines, and excommunication. The only limitation on the force of a congregational regulation was the need to get an approval, from the rabbi or rabbis, of the regulation or of a punitive act ensuing from it. The approval was required in order to ensure some preventive control of *halakhic* authorities over these congregational regulations⁶⁴.

Clearly, then, from a *halakhic* point of view, there is, in principle, nothing that can invalidate the excommunication of Spinoza as imposed by the *ma'amad*, with the consent of the *hakhamim*.

Notice that the fact that an excommunication was proclaimed and imposed by the heads of the congregation does not necessarily limit its application in time and place. Some have held the view that an excommunication binds not only the contemporary generation who witnessed the excommunication but also their offspring: “And even the sons they beget, generation after generation, ought to behave in conformity with what their fathers agreed upon and banned⁶⁵”. Even confining an excommunication to the boundaries of the specific community where it was enforced is not that obvious, since it has also been ruled by some *halakhic* authorities that an individual expelled from a community for having transgressed the law “shall be treated the same in his own town and in any other town, for he is separated from the entire people of Israel and must be treated accordingly”⁶⁶.

XVII

The excommunication had, then, a *halakhic* validity, and even more so, an institutional validity. In 1639, following the merging of the three Portuguese communities in Amsterdam into a single community – the *Talmud Torah* community – certain regulations were explicitly made to ensure the superior authority of the *ma'amad* with regard to whatever concerns the congregation. “The *ma'amad* is sovereign in its leadership of the congregation”, establishes article 12 of the basic regulations of the *Talmud Torah* Congregation, and “it shall have authority and superiority over everybody and no person shall be allowed to contravene their Reso-

⁶⁴ See J. Katz, *Tradition and Crisis* (New York, 1961), p. 101.

⁶⁵ Rashba, *Responsa* (Livorno, 1755), iii, res. 411, p. 81a (Hebrew). See also: M. Elon, *Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles* (Jerusalem, 1973), ch. 19, p. 591 (Hebrew).

⁶⁶ Bah's Commentary on *Tur Yoreh De'ah*, 334. For the 1639 case of Moses Hamis Orta, who was excommunicated by the Amsterdam community because he had already been excommunicated by the Hamburg community, see Y. Kaplan, *Herem*, p. 138.

lutions . . . and those who will do so . . . shall incur the penalty of excommunication”⁶⁷.

The functions of the *ma'amad*, according to other regulations, include authorizing of the writing and delivery of a letter of divorce, editing and amending books and authorizing their printing. Moreover: “Whoever issues, delivers or testifies about a divorce without the permission of the *ma'amad* shall be excommunicated”⁶⁸. These and other regulations clearly indicate the unchallenged authority of the *ma'amad* vis-à-vis each member of the community. A similar authority was granted to the *ma'amad* vis-à-vis the rabbis appointed by it. Thus, for instance, one of the regulations provides that “decisions concerning the laws – in the hands of the *hakhamim* by a majority of vote; in case of no vote – the final decision is to be made by the *ma'amad*; and if a *hakham* does not accept it – he will immediately be relieved from his duties, without pay . . .”. Such a legal structure was not peculiar to that community of Amsterdam. In the sister community of the Portuguese Jews in Hamburg, a resolution was made in 1666 to leave the *hakham* the right to penalize a certain circumciser “in accordance with his wickedness, as the *hakham* saw fit, except that he shall not proclaim his excommunication, for proclaiming grave sins is entrusted only to the *ma'amad*”⁶⁹.

No direct evidence is at our disposal concerning a permit granted to the *ma'amad* by the city authorities to use excommunication as a punitive measure before Spinoza's excommunication. An indirect evidence for this sort of permit is found in a letter of 1683 addressed by the *hakhamim* of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam – Aboab, Sasportas and Oliveyra – to the heads of the Council of the Four Lands. The letter discusses the ban imposed by the latter on the Ashkenazi community of Amsterdam for dismissing its chief rabbi, R. David Lida, who was of a Polish origin. In this letter they note with concern that this ban will provoke “hatred and resentment among the nations, particularly among the men of power, who do not approve of *herem* and *niddui* and who long ago . . . decreed that we are not to place under *niddui* or *herem* any one living in their country”⁷⁰. This suggests that in the years antedating this letter, the city authorities denied the heads of the community the right to ex-

⁶⁷ *Ascamot*, pp. 77-78. The regulations can be found in full in W.Chr. Pieterse, *Daniel Levi De Barios als geschiedschrijver van de Portugees-Israëlitische Gemeente te Amsterdam in zijn "Triumpho del Gobierno Popular"* (Amsterdam, 1968), Appendix 14, pp. 155-167.

⁶⁸ See A. Wiznitzer, “The Merger Agreement and Regulations of Congregation Talmud Torah of Amsterdam 1638-1639”, *Historia Judaica*, xx (1958), 109-132.

⁶⁹ Regulation 20 (our note 67). On related aspects of the authority of the *ma'amad*, see Y. Kaplan, *Herem*.

⁷⁰ *Pinkas Va'ad Arba Arazot*, ed. Israel Halperin (Jerusalem, 1945), pp. 186-193 (Hebrew).

communicate, which apparently had been previously entrusted in their power. Indeed, the *Ascamot* include the decision of the city authorities, as made on 27 January 1683, as well as its subsequent revocation⁷¹. Graetz's speculation that this prohibition resulted from the excommunication of Spinoza⁷² is groundless, for the community imposed various excommunications later on, during the Sabbataian awakening in the years 1665-1666, and also, for instance, in the case of the physician Joseph Abarbanel Barboza, who was excommunicated in Amsterdam in 1677⁷³.

In this context, we should mention the criticism made by Philip van Limborch, an eminent and moderate Dutch theologian, who was also a friend of John Locke. In a letter to one of his friends, dated 12 March 1662, van Limborch protests against the right of the Jewish community to excommunicate the members of the community for their opinions⁷⁴. This too serves as indirect evidence to the fact that the *ma'amad*, and thus the entire community, had a well-recognized internal authority to exert the punishment of excommunication upon congregants that have relapsed.

XIX

Let us turn now to a fourth natural question – did the heads of the congregation excommunicate Spinoza because his views were considered by the *hakhamim* as clear-cut manifestations of absolute denial of the Jewish religion?

The fact that a particular individual in the congregation held these views did not in itself constitute a complete institutional break-off. One example emerges from the Prado case. According to the records of the community, in 1657, the elders of the congregation, along with the *ma'amad* and the *hakhamim*, agreed to remove the excommunication if he were willing to travel “overseas, to districts populated by Jews” who were observant of the Jewish law. Two of the *parnassim* tried to convince him to accept the offer and promised to help him and his family, in exchange, but he declined the offer⁷⁵.

The text of the proclamation of the excommunication of Spinoza also

⁷¹ *Ascamot* B, pp. 67-69.

⁷² Z.(H.) Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Hebrew edn: Warsaw, 1890-1899), viii. 536.

⁷³ Another piece of indirect evidence is Hugo Grotius's proposals which will be discussed later on. However, as should be recalled, these proposals were not officially approved.

See also Y. Kaplan, *Herem*, p. 146, note 91, for a 1670 related decision of the Amsterdam magistrates.

⁷⁴ See K.O. Meinsma, *Spinoza und sein Kreis* (Berlin, 1909), p. 521ff.

⁷⁵ See Revah (our note 4).

mentions “promises” that the *ma’amad* was willing to make in order to reform Spinoza. An indirect piece of evidence concerning the contents of these promises is mentioned by Bayle but its details are not proven⁷⁶. At any rate, it is unlikely that the *ma’amad* expected Spinoza to change his views in exchange for keeping these promises.

The answer lies in a different direction. The highest interest of the *ma’amad* was to openly maintain a stable and autonomous Jewish-Portuguese community. Some of the heads of the community – those who were prosperous merchants – also had a plain interest to maintain the economic activity of the Jews in those branches of commerce and finance which were open to members of the community⁷⁷. As Allison points out, “[Jewish] community was a tightly knit economic group”, which, as a whole, was fairly prosperous. The threat posed to the Jewish community in Amsterdam was a real one: any conspicuous deviation from the civil rule could put in jeopardy the economic existence of the community, if not its very existence⁷⁸.

The heads of the community did not enjoy absolute autonomy. Outwardly they had to ensure that proper relations be maintained with all the hierarchical levels of government to which they were subjected either directly or indirectly. One must consider, if only quite briefly, the complex ruling system prevailing in those days in order to appreciate the political task faced by the *ma’amad*. They were governed at one and the same time by the municipality of Amsterdam; by the council of the province of Holland and West Friesland, which consisted of representatives of the important cities of the province and representatives of the district nobility; by the “States General” council of the “Union”, the federation of the northern provinces of the “Low Countries”, which consisted of the representatives of the seven provinces that had signed the Union of Utrecht treaty in 1579; and occasionally by a “Stadholder”, this or that prince of the House of Orange⁷⁹. These four levels – the city, the province, the federation and the prince – were not a simple hierarchy but formed a rather intricate network of formal authorities and practical powers, each striving to maintain as much sovereignty as possible. The

⁷⁶ See P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (Rotterdam, 1702), vol. iii.

⁷⁷ See H.I. Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Port Washington and London, 1973).

⁷⁸ H.E. Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction* (New Haven and London, 1987), p. 3f.

⁷⁹ Here and in the sequel we rely on the detailed description of the religious and political history of the Low Countries which can be found in the following books of P. Geyl: *The Revolt of the Netherlands (1555-1609)* (2nd edn, London, 1958); *The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century*, part I, 1609-1648; part II, 1648-1715 (2nd edn, London, 1961); *History of the Low Countries: Episodes and Problems* (London and New York, 1964).

Stadholder, for instance, was elected by each one of the provinces. In this sense he depended on them. However, he had partial authority in appointing the mayors of those towns that were represented in the province councils. In this sense, it is they who were somewhat dependent on him. The Union army consisted of provincial units, but was headed by the Stadholder while being financially maintained by the provinces, on the basis of their relative economic strength. The province of Holland and West Friesland, which was the wealthiest, could weaken the Prince of Orange's power by stopping payments to some of the units, which it did. The prince, in turn, could use the units supported by the other provinces against a rebellious province, and so he did too.

XX

Under such an unstable constellation of powers, the Jewish community could not put its absolute trust in either one of the sides. Several years before the excommunication of Spinoza, two crucial events took place in Holland and in the northern lowland countries which demonstrated the potential inherent in this political network for good and for bad.

In 1650, two years after the Peace of Munster was signed, according to which the King of Spain recognized that "the Lords States-Generals of the United Provinces and the respective Provinces thereof . . . are free and sovereign States [and] Provinces"⁸⁰, thus terminating the 80-year war, William II, Prince of Orange, still saw fit to wage war with Spain so as to assist his allies in France. However, the city of Amsterdam and the entire province of Holland were not interested in war. They sought peace, welfare and prosperity. The province actually disbanded part of the army of the republic. The prince, supported by the Council of the Union, made visits to the voting towns of the province of Holland in an attempt to dissuade them from opposing him. The crisis reached its peak when the prince reached the gates of Amsterdam heading an army under the command of his cousin, Count William Frederick, the Stadholder of the province of Friesland, threatening to besiege the city. Giving in to his intimidation, the city signed an agreement, according to which the heads of the city were to be replaced and the actual disbanding of the military units was revoked. Apparently, the governing system changed. However, before long the tables were turned: three months after the agreement was made, the prince died without leaving an heir who would succeed him and for many years afterwards no other Stadholder was elected by the republicans. During the time of Spinoza's ex-

⁸⁰ See P. Geyl, *The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century* (our note 79), p. 154.

communication, most of the provinces were not headed by any Stadholder.

Extreme upheavals of this sort in the ruling system were bound to leave their impact on such problematic communities as that community of the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam and prompted them to cultivate political caution.

This was especially necessary since such problematic crises were not rare events. In 1651 serious disputes evolved between the Dutch republic and the Protestant commonwealth of England. These disputes derived from economic issues and they escalated with Cromwell's Navigation Act which prohibited using non-English vessels for importing goods to the ports of England. A few months later, a war broke out between the two countries which severely damaged the Dutch economy, including a substantial group of the members of the Jewish-Portuguese community. The success of Cromwell's naval forces was met with profound dissatisfaction in the towns of Holland and in other towns of the Union and once again the voice of the Orange party was heard in public. The Westminster Peace of 1654 put an end to the war but was followed by a severe domestic crisis since the province of Holland had reached a separate secret agreement with Cromwell whereby no one of the Orange Family was to be elected as a prince. The reason behind this agreement was that the Orange Family was related to the Stuarts, the Royal House of England and Cromwell's sworn enemy. The other provinces regarded this agreement as a violation of the treaty of the Union of Utrecht, which established the "eternal alliance and confederation" of the northern provinces, and Johan de Witt, who then rose to power in Holland, defended himself by resorting to legal and pragmatic arguments.

In the midst of the war years, one of the *hakhamim* of the congregation, Menasseh ben Israel, planned a trip to England, to obtain Cromwell's consent for the settlement of Jews there⁸¹. The Amsterdam community, which had learnt its lesson about the necessity of political caution, neither dissuaded him from making this trip nor encouraged him in his mission. When he finally was about to set out, the *ma'amad* decided to grant him a leave of absence for the purpose of conducting personal business. Their resolution, dated 27 December 1655⁸², as it appears in the *Ascamot*, questions the value of this trip. Menasseh ben Israel, in his turn, wanted to be officially recognized as the missionary of the Jews. Hence, on 2 September of the same year he appealed for help to the communities of Italy

⁸¹ See C. Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1934).

⁸² *Ascamot*, pp. 397-398.

and Holstein (namely, Hamburg and its sisters) but not to the Amsterdam community⁸³.

XXI

All the hierarchical levels of the government which the Jews had to please, by taking necessary precautions, were of Protestant affiliation, though not all of them endorsed the Calvinist establishment, which desired to impose the Church on the State. Article xiii of the treaty of the Union of Utrecht of 1579 states⁸⁴: "concerning the matter of religion, Holland and Zeeland shall act at their own discretion whereas the other provinces of this Union may conform to the contents of the Religious Peace Treaty . . . or else they may introduce (all together or each province independently) . . . such regulations as they consider proper for the peace and welfare of the provinces, towns and their particular members and for the preservation of all people, either secular or clerical, their properties and rights, provided that in accordance with the [1576] Pacification of Ghent, each individual enjoys freedom of religion and no one is persecuted or questioned about his religion"⁸⁵. It should be understood that in context, the words "Holland and Zeeland shall act at their own discretion" disguise a position of intolerance, in contrast to what is implied from what follows in the text, for in these two provinces only the Reformed Church was granted freedom.

In 1619, when the fate of the Jewish community was at stake in the province of Holland, which included Amsterdam, the famous conflict between the Calvinist establishment and the Arminian opposition was in full force. Apparently, this was a dispute over the theological principle of predestination – whether or not human destiny and reward and pun-

⁸³ On Menasseh ben Israel's attempts to readmit the Jews to England, see David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 190-231. Jacob L. Teichner, in his paper "Why Was Spinoza Banned?", *The Menorah Journal*, xlv (1957), 41-60, argued that Spinoza was excommunicated because he was involved in Menasseh ben Israel's attempts to readmit the Jews to England. Given the attitude of the *ma'amad* towards Menasseh ben Israel himself at the same time, this hypothesis seems quite implausible. Indeed, it is incompatible with the evidence accumulated since Teichner argued for it. Part of Teichner's argument rests on a mistaken ascription to Menasseh ben Israel of a treatise written by Saul Levi Morteira. (This treatise was later published by Altmann [see our note 17], who in turn does not mention Teichner's previous discussion of it.)

⁸⁴ Quoted from *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*, ed. E.H. Kossman and A.F. Mellink (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 169-170. See also the additional article of the treaty, dated 1 February 1579, which is an "explanation of the xiiiith article", pp. 172-173.

⁸⁵ A copy of the document can be found in *The Low Countries in Early Modern Times: A Documentary History*, ed. H.H. Rowen (New York, 1972), doc. 16, pp. 73-74.

ishment are predetermined. The real issue, however, was power, namely who was going to dominate – the Calvinist Church or the civil authorities of the provinces. The Arminians demanded that no Christian be persecuted for his views as long as he was faithful to the Scriptures.⁸⁶

Neither of these camps was sympathetic to the Jews. One of the important figures in the Remonstrant opposition, Caspar Barlaeus of the theological faculty of the University of Leiden, from which he was expelled after the 1619 Synod of Dort, presented the principles of his movement in a well-known document, but when he got to the Jews he no longer advocated the principles of tolerance that he fostered. This is what he wrote: “Judge for yourself, glorious Prince, is it not a disgraceful and unjustified practice that the Jews, the overt enemies and blasphemers of our Savior, are given the right to enjoy religious freedom in the strongest city of Holland, while we, who are Christians and of the Reformed Church, are not granted this right neither there nor in any other place?”⁸⁷ The resolutions of the Synod of Dort, which symbolizes the victory of the anti-Remonstrant, express similar views held by the other side. In a formal letter addressed to the federal States General, the Synod requests the following: “that there be found a way to stop the blasphemy practiced by the Jews who live amongst us as well as to prevent them from converting anybody from our faith to theirs”⁸⁸. It must be borne in mind that the “Marranos” from Portugal and Spain were likely to arrive in Holland as Christians who were supposed to be converted to Judaism.

On 13 December 1619, after having reviewed proposals submitted to it by the renowned Hugo Grotius and Adriaan Pauw, subsequently the mayor of Amsterdam, and after having studied the regulations of Amsterdam concerning this matter, the Council of the Province of Holland and West Friesland resolved not to outline a general policy concerning the settlement of the Jews but rather to leave this matter to the exclusive discretion of each city separately. Nonetheless, this Council forbade to compel the Jews to wear special garments that would single them out. It seems that the council was pleased with the Amsterdam regulations and the proposals submitted to its consideration because it brought them to the attention of the mayors of Haarlem and Alkmaar “so that they make proper use of them”. However, the proposals were not accorded an official status anywhere⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ On Jacobus Arminius and the Arminians, see P. Geyl, *The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century* (our note 79), part I, pp. 41-46.

⁸⁷ Rowen (our note 85), doc. 28, p. 132.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. 28, p. 137.

⁸⁹ *Register van Holland en West Vriesland van den Jaaren 1613-1619*, p. 1165. See also appendix to Meijer's edition of Grotius's *Remonstrantie* (note 96 below).

XXII

The authorities of Amsterdam allowed the Jewish community to humbly maintain its way of life and they rejected the recurrent attempts made by the "Protestant Elders" to restrict the freedom of the Jews. Thus, for instance, the latter complained to the "Burgomasters" that the Jewish community expanded a "*Beth Ya'akov*" Synagogue by adding study halls for "*Talmud Torah*" and "*Ets Haim*". Their resolution, dated 12 March 1620, states the following: "As it has been learned that the Jews are once more openly exercising their rites contrary to the ban issued by the . . . Burgomasters . . . [I]t has been agreed to remonstrate about this matter with . . . the Burgomasters, which will be done by R. Rolandus and Cornelis Schellinger". The Burgomasters, however, dismissed the complaint⁹⁰.

The Jewish community itself did its utmost to maintain a low-keyed demeanor. In August 1639, the first *ma'amad* of the *Talmud Torah* united congregation supplemented the basic regulations with additional ones, including a regulation which prohibited wedding or funeral processions. The reason for this, as provided in the regulation itself, was to prevent possible conflicts with non-Jews, who might be upset by the procession. A more important regulation prohibited against criticizing the Christian religion while talking with Christians or discussing religious matters with them in an attempt to convert them to Judaism, lest this would threaten the "freedom we enjoy" and would make the Jews hateful "for an act which they are not required to engage in according to religion"⁹¹.

True, the response of the Dutch to Jews in their midst was indeed an exceptional case of tolerance in a Christian Europe that either ejected or confined the Jews in humiliating and degrading circumstances. Signs of toleration were apparent enough: "There was no Amsterdam Ghetto, no yellow badge, horned hat or lock-up curfew behind gates all walls"⁹². But freedom of Jews was strictly limited. As a Jewish rabbi reported in 1616, "Each [of the Jews] may follow his own belief but may not openly show that he is of a different faith from the inhabitants of the city"⁹³ and there is no reason to assume that in this respect the situation changed for the better in the coming decades.

The rulers of the town or the province would not have overlooked a

⁹⁰ In this paragraph we used F.J. Dubiez, *The Sephardi Community of Amsterdam* (no place and date of publication mentioned), where a similar 1629 remonstrance which was rebuffed by the city authorities is also mentioned.

⁹¹ See our note 68.

⁹² S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of the Dutch Culture in the Golden Ages* (London, 1987), p. 587.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 589.

glaring deviation by a member of the community from the image of the Jewish resident they had in mind. Obviously, the *ma'amad* regarded it as its duty to prevent such striking deviations that could induce the authorities to interfere with the life of the community, depriving of liberties, imposing restrictions, punishing, and the like. They did not hold back from excommunicating, for example, David Curiel, for appealing to the civil court of the town concerning a financial dispute the investigation of which could have revealed to the municipal authorities that some couples who belonged to the congregation were married according to Jewish law but not registered as such by the civil authorities.

XXIII

The tolerable image of the Jewish resident, in accordance with which the *ma'amad* felt it had to conduct itself in dealing with the authorities outside the community, was that of a *law-abiding resident* adhering to the principles of the Jewish faith. What these principles of faith are, we can deduce from various sources. Here we shall only bring evidence from the class of pledges and oaths that Jews were supposed to, or required to take.

The most frequent oath that Jews were forced to take is, of course, *More Judaico*. It is an oath which Jews were compelled to take in lawsuits with non-Jews, and it prevailed in Europe from the early Middle Ages until the eighteenth century (and in some places even later). The oath was usually imposed on Jews by non-Jews although it was meant to be conceived as authentically Jewish, stemming from the Jewish law itself. Among other reasons for imposing it on Jews was the fear that the "*Kol Nidrei*" prayer, of the Day of Atonement, frees the Jew from his commitments. The text of the oath varied from place to place, but usually one can find in most versions references to the existence of God "who created heaven and earth, valleys and mountains, wood, foliage, and grass"; the existence of Divine Law "that God wrote with His hand and gave to Moses on Mount Sinai"; and the existence of the soul which will be brought to judgment⁹⁴.

Already on 8 November 1606, Amsterdam determined the wording of the oath to be taken by the Jews when they appeared before the municipal courts. The Amsterdam version of the oath opens by saying – "You swear by the living God Almighty, who created heaven and earth,

⁹⁴ See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, xii. 1302-1304. See also P.H. Albert, "The Jewish Oath in Nineteenth Century France", *Tel Aviv University Spiegel Lectures in European Jewish History*, iii (1982).

and by the Law he gave Moses, honestly and truthfully to answer the questions put to you . . .”. And then it concludes by saying – “And if you answer falsely or incorrectly . . . that you should be plagued and punished now and forever with all the curses, plagues and such sufferings that God visited upon Israel . . .”⁹⁵.

Grotius, who was an Arminian and consequently a minimalist in terms of imposing religious restrictions on the Jews, proposed that everyone of the Jews settling down in the province of Holland and West Friesland should be required to pledge allegiance to his faith. “That is, that they believe that there is only one God, the creator and leader of everything, the source of all good, whom we should honor and worship and to whom we should pray; That Moses and the prophets wrote the truth with the inspiration of God; that after death there will be another life, in which the virtuous will be rewarded and the wicked will be punished”⁹⁶. The sanction for breaching the allegiance appears in section 13 of Grotius’s proposal and it consists of “death or corporeal punishment, according to the merits of the case”⁹⁷. Although Grotius’s suggestion was not put into effect, we can infer from it what a moderate Calvinist, and all the more so a non-moderate Calvinist, was willing to regard as an intolerable deviation by a Jew from the principles of his own religion.

The last example in this connection derives from *Teshu’at Israel*, Menasseh ben Israel’s book, written several months before Spinoza was excommunicated. Setting out to dismiss the blood libel, Menasseh ben Israel says in the introduction: “I swear . . . by the living God Almighty, who created heaven and earth, who gave His Torah to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai, that I have never come across such a custom among the people of Israel . . .”. He concludes by saying the following: “and if I speak falsely concerning this matter, I shall be plagued with all the plagues mentioned in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, I shall not behold the blessing and solace of Zion and shall not witness the resurrection of the dead”⁹⁸.

One common element is shared by all of these pledges and oaths, namely the allusion to the same three principles of faith, though in somewhat different ways – the existence of God, the creator and ruler of the universe; the truth of the Torah; the existence of life in the hereafter. A departure from these three principles is not to be tolerated in a Jew, even according to the Christian minimalist. Yet these are precisely the prin-

⁹⁵ See Bloom (our note 77), p. 20, note 93.

⁹⁶ See J. Meijer, *Hugo de Groot (Grotius): Remonstrantie nopen de Ordre dije in de Landen van Hollandt ende Westvrieslandt dijent Gestelt op de Joden* (Amsterdam, 1949), pp. 116-132.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 122.

⁹⁸ See Roth (our note 81), p. 265.

ciples denied by Baruch de Spinoza and Daniel de Prado according to the testimony of monk Thomas and his friend the Captain, a denial which induced the Jewish community to eject them from it.

Whoever preached in public that these principles are wrong not only assaulted the self-image of the Jew as emerging from the works of Hakham Saul Levi Morteira and Hakham Isaac Aboab da Fonseca and from the writings of Hakham Menasseh ben Israel. Even more importantly, he also discredited the civil and Christian image of the Jew as embodied, for instance, in these pledges and oaths. The *ma'amad* could not afford to ignore such an image.

XXIV

Moreover, just during the months of the excommunication, the struggle that the Calvinist establishment had waged against Descartes's philosophy reached its peak⁹⁹. On 20 May 1647, the curates of the University of Leiden made a resolution ordering the professors and regents "to avoid publishing the name of Descartes or mentioning him in theses . . . as well as to avoid mentioning him and his views in their debates . . ." ¹⁰⁰. Other universities followed suit despite the counter efforts by Descartes, who for years had been there. In 1656, before the excommunication of Spinoza, the Council of the province of Holland and West Friesland resolved "that after mature deliberation and consultation upon the subject, they consider it necessary to take care by proper means that the true Theology and Holy Scripture should not be offended through liberty of philosophizing or by any abuse of it" and further resolved that the professors of philosophy should take an oath that "one must believe in the divine authority more than in human judgment" as well as that, for the sake of order and peace, they should "leave off propagating the philosophemata drawn from Dr. Cartesius's philosophy, which today give offense to a number of people" ¹⁰¹.

At that time, the strongest person in the province was Johan de Witt. Tolerant as he was, he was not entirely free from stances prevalent during his period: two years before the above resolution was made, in the famous 1654 "Deductie" he had written at the end of the war with England, de Witt argued that there was enough binding material to keep the Seven Provinces together, including material interests, political arrangements, and "above all" religion: "And are not above all their hearts and

⁹⁹ See S.L. Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands cartesianisme* (Amsterdam, 1954).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁰¹ See P. Geyl (our note 79), part II, pp. 107-109.

souls united and bound together by the spiritual and divine bond of one and the same religion?"¹⁰²

Spinoza must have been familiar at that time with some of the writings of Descartes¹⁰³, and perhaps some of the ideas that caused the rift between him and the *ma'amad* and *hakhamim* might have been inspired by Descartes. It is not utterly implausible to assume that at that time Spinoza had already adopted from the Cartesian philosophy its methods and that these methods had led him to some of his views.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the years during which Spinoza started studying Descartes's writings. Of course, Spinoza's first published work in philosophy is an exposition of Parts I and II of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy* (Amsterdam, 1663). Lodewijk Meyer's preface reports that part of Spinoza's work was "dictated, to a certain pupil of his, whom he was teaching the Cartesian philosophy"¹⁰⁴. The work itself quotes "Professor Heereboord of Leiden"¹⁰⁵.

Adrianus Heerebord was a professor of philosophy and a sub-regent of the "States Seminary" at Leiden. During the 1640s Heerebord became an admirer of Descartes and even avowed himself a Cartesian, as a result of which he was instructed by the regent "that in future he shall please to confine himself within the limits of the Aristotelian philosophy subscribed to in this Academy"¹⁰⁶. Heerebord was a professor at Leiden until his death in 1661. There is some indirect evidence to the effect that Spinoza may have studied at the University of Leiden after his excommunication¹⁰⁷. It has seemed, therefore, reasonable to assume that Spinoza was a student of Heerebord and that the former's interest in Cartesian philosophy resulted from his studies with the latter. If we are right in suggesting that Spinoza's excommunication may have been related not only to his and Juan de Prado's views but also to public discussions he may have had of Cartesian philosophy, then Spinoza's interest in

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, part II, pp. 106-107.

¹⁰³ It is noteworthy that the practical warning which concludes the excommunication of Spinoza refers to "any treatise composed or written by him". We assume that this concerns books he has written himself or copied from others, as was customary during that period. Perhaps these were Descartes's works or the writings of Isaac La Peyrère.

¹⁰⁴ *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and transl. Edwin Curley, vol. i (Princeton, 1985), p. 227. On Lodewijk Meyer, see C.L. Thijssen-Schoute, *Lodewijk Meyer en diens verhouding tot Descartes en Spinoza* (Leiden, 1954; republished in the author's *Uit de Republiek der Letteren*, 's-Gravenhage, 1967), pp. 173-192.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

¹⁰⁶ P. Geyl (our note 79), part I, p. 219. See also Thijssen-Schoute, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-101.

¹⁰⁷ See Revah (our note 4), pp. 32 and 36. Richard Popkin and Edwin Curley mention this possibility, without invoking any additional evidence or reason.

Heerebord was not the cause of his interest in the philosophy of Descartes but rather its effect.

As long as Spinoza discussed his ideas or Descartes's works or other Cartesian writings in public, his acts could serve as a potential source of undesirable tension between the provincial authorities and the community and of a likely friction with the authorities of the city of Amsterdam, who were less moderate than those of the province¹⁰⁸.

Thus, when the heads of the congregation failed to persuade Spinoza to conceal his views regarding the principles of faith or Cartesian philosophy, they were left, with the consent of the *hakhamim*, with only one proven method of averting the dangerous friction. Once Spinoza was excommunicated and the danger was over, the *ma'amad* was no longer interested in the views of the young philosopher and his philosophical activities¹⁰⁹.

XXV

Some of our readers may by now have wondered why attention should be paid in the context of Spinoza's excommunication to Spinoza's interest in Cartesian philosophy. Our answer involves several arguments.

There are strong reasons to assume that Spinoza's excommunication involved views he had admittedly held and deeds he had done which were considered by the *ma'amad* to be highly sensitive. Notice, for example, that the nature of Spinoza's views and deeds is not specified in any detail in the official proclamation of his excommunication. As has been noticed by Y. Kaplan¹¹⁰, the community's documents manifest clear marks of sensitivity and it would be only natural to interpret the lack of a detailed depiction of Spinoza's views and deeds as an indication of this sensitivity.

¹⁰⁸ There is no reason to assume, with Shimizu (our note 15), that the *hakhamim* of the community at the time "were interested in current trends of philosophy", including Cartesian philosophy (*op. cit.*, p. 331).

¹⁰⁹ It is not known of any discourse written by a member of the community during Spinoza's lifetime and against him. Even after his death only few treatises of this sort were written. Many years after Spinoza was excommunicated, the community still desisted from being involved in an open debate on the questions of religion if it was problematic from the point of view of the relations with the dominant Christian environment. In 1687 the *ma'amad* resolved that debates with Christians on the questions of the various systems of faith were forbidden "in public as well as in secret because they are dangerous to our existence . . .". Indeed, one may safely assume that when the *ma'amad* forbade participation in theological discussions with Christians back in 1640 (*Ascamot*, p. 73), they had exactly the same considerations in mind.

¹¹⁰ Y. Kaplan, *Herem*, pp. 32-35. Kaplan mentions cases of recorded cancellations of some excommunication where there is no record of its being proclaimed or imposed. Indeed, this is not the only possible way of manifesting sensitivity in official records.

We offer an explanation of the details of Spinoza's case being considered by the authorities of the Jewish Portuguese community as highly sensitive in terms of both the general content of his views and the particular political circumstances of expressing them publicly. The content of these views involved Spinoza's conceptions of deity, human soul and the Bible. The political circumstances of voicing his theological and philosophical views were, we suggest, directly related to the sensitive issue of Cartesian philosophy and thereby also indirectly related to the even more sensitive issues of religious tolerance and State-Church relationships. Thus, we suggest an explanation of the high degree of official sensitivity reflected in the lack of crucial details in the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication in terms of the historical background of the political debate about Cartesian philosophy.

Secondly, notice that the wording of this proclamation, laconic as it is, mentions not only "the abominable heresies which he practiced and taught" but also "his monstrous deeds". Read carefully, it seems that under consideration were rather two different types of deeds ascribed to Spinoza. There were deeds directly related to his "abominable heresies", namely teaching them, but then there must have been additional deeds, "his monstrous deeds". If those phrases do not refer to different deeds, there is no explanation for the combination "abominable heresies which he practiced and taught and . . . his monstrous deeds". We should, then, look for an explanation of this official wording in terms of some deeds which could be ascribed to Spinoza at the time and considered "monstrous" by the authorities of his community. Our hypothesis, that before Spinoza was excommunicated he had been interested in Cartesian philosophy and had expressed this philosophical inclination in public, provides one with deeds of the required nature: they are different from acts of voicing or teaching his views of God, the soul and the Bible, and furthermore, they are considered "monstrous" by the highly cautious authorities of the community because of the association they bear with the ongoing religio-political debate about State-Church relationships.

Our "Cartesian connection" hypothesis explains several points in the wording of the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication. Are there any readily available alternative explanations of the same facts?

XXVI

There seems no reason to accept a "Karaites connection" hypothesis. A few years before Spinoza was born, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (also called "Yashar of Candia") spent some time in one of the congregations of the Jewish community in Amsterdam. Apparently, he could have

served as an intermediate chain between the Karaites and Spinoza. On the one hand, he expressed, in two books, published by Menasseh ben Israel in Amsterdam in 1629, an unusually positive attitude towards Karaites. On the other hand, so it has been claimed¹¹¹, marks of Delmedigo's influence may be found in Spinoza's *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*. However, no relation of any import has thus been established between Spinoza and the Karaites. First, as has been noticed by Kaplan¹¹², the paragraphs of Spinoza's *Short Treatise* which are claimed to show an influence of Delmedigo on Spinoza are not Karaite in any sense. The fact that Spinoza carried in his library one of Delmedigo's books is also of no apparent significance.

Another seemingly possible chain between the Karaites and Spinoza would not fare better. The publisher of Delmedigo's books, Menasseh ben Israel, had some correspondence with the Karaite Zerah ben Nathan (of Troki) as a result of which he published in 1643 a certain Karaite book¹¹³. However, though it could hardly be imagined that Spinoza did not have any contacts with Menasseh ben Israel, it would be implausible to assume that under Menasseh ben Israel's influence, Spinoza became interested in the Karaites to an extent which outraged the *ma'amad* and the *hakhamim*. Menasseh ben Israel was no friend of the Karaites, as is clear from his writings¹¹⁴. Moreover, the Karaite writings that Spinoza could have read did not include anything which could have served as intellectual grounds for the three views which Spinoza and Juan de Prado held and which played a major role in their excommunication¹¹⁵.

XXVII

We move now from the implausible "Karaite connection" hypothesis to a seemingly possible "Quaker connection" hypothesis¹¹⁶.

In a letter dated 17 April 1657, which has drawn the attention of Qua-

¹¹¹ J. d'Ancona, "Delmedigo, Menasseh ben Israel en Spinoza", *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Genootschap voor de Joodsche Wetenschap in Nederland*, iv (1940), 133ff.

¹¹² Yosef Kaplan, in this volume.

¹¹³ For the references, see *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, footnotes 52 and 53.

¹¹⁵ According to the Karaite creed, God is a creator, who revealed himself to Moses and to other prophets, which means that God is personal and does not exist only philosophically. Secondly, God sent through Moses the Torah, which contains the perfect truth. Thirdly, God rewards every person according to one's way of life.

¹¹⁶ In this section we rely on Richard Popkin's related works, in particular his Introduction to Richard H. Popkin and Michael A. Singer, *Spinoza's Earliest Publication?, The Hebrew Translation of Margaret Fell's 'A Loving Salutation to the Seed of Abraham among the Jews, wherever they are scattered up and down upon the Face of the Earth'* (Assen-Maastricht, 1987), pp. 1-15, and his paper "Spinoza and Samuel Fisher", *Philosophia*, xv (1985), 219-236.

ker historians this century, William Ames, the leader of the Quaker mission in Amsterdam at the time, wrote to Margaret Fell, a prominent Quaker in England, that "[t]here is a Jew at Amsterdam that by the Jews is Cast out (as he himself and others sayeth) because he owneth no other teacher but the light and he sent for me and I spoke toe him and he was pretty tender and doeth owne all that is spoken". It has been taken for granted by various historians, for seventy odd years now, that the said Jew was Spinoza¹¹⁷, but it has been Richard Popkin who has recently conclusively shown that one "can be certain (as certain as a sceptic can be) that Spinoza was the particular Jew who could have met Ames".

Since Ames sent his letter to Fell less than a year after Spinoza had been excommunicated, it would be only natural to ask ourselves whether Spinoza had some relationships with Ames or with other Quakers before he was excommunicated.

The wording of Ames's letter suggests that Spinoza "sent for" and then "spoke toe" him after he had been "by the Jews Cast out (as he himself and others sayeth)".

Another Amsterdam Quaker, William Caton, wrote Margaret Fell, in a letter dated 18 November 1657: "I have bene with a Jew and have showed him thy books . . . And he hath undertaken to translate it for us, he being expert in several languadges". Later, on 15 March 1658, Caton writes Fell again about "the Jew that is to translate [Fell's book *A Loving Salutation*] into Hebrew". He reports that "the Jew" has the book "now, and is translating it; like he hath done the other" and adds that "the Jew that translates it, remains very friendly in his way". If we believe, with Richard Popkin, that the translator mentioned in these letters is the same Jew mentioned by Ames, then we realize that Spinoza rendered the Quakers in Amsterdam some services during 1657. If Ames was the first Quaker who met Spinoza, then the whole relationship between Spinoza and the Quakers most probably started after Spinoza had been excommunicated and there seem to be no grounds for a "Quaker connection" hypothesis, according to which such relationships played some role in Spinoza's excommunication. However, do we have to assume that before Spinoza met Ames he had not met any other Quaker? Such an assumption would seem to us to be unwarranted.

The Quaker mission in Amsterdam started during 1656, but the young

To be sure, in these publications, Popkin does not put forward the "Quaker connection" hypothesis we are going to discuss.

¹¹⁷ This has been taken for granted even when Ames's letter to Fell is not under consideration. For example, in the *Biographical Index of Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700*, ed. H. Barbour and A.O. Roberts (Grand Rapids, 1973), we find under "William Ames", that he "probably knew Spinoza at Amsterdam" (p. 581).

William Caton (b. 1636) made trips to Amsterdam and met Jews there already during 1655. According to some Quaker historians, Caton was in Holland "since 1655 almost constantly"¹¹⁸. The Jews, he wrote later, would not permit religious debates during the Sabbath service they had in their Synagogue, "but after their Worship was ended, I and another friend had some pretty good Service with some of them in their Houses; but they are a very hard, obstinate People in their way". There is no reason to assume that Spinoza could not have been one of the Jews who conversed "in their Houses" with Caton and Samuel Fisher¹¹⁹. Recall that according to Ames's letter it was Spinoza who sent for Ames, which shows that Spinoza was interested in meeting a person most probably known to be a Quaker. Moreover, when the two meet, Spinoza tells Ames that he was "cast out" by the Jews "because he owneth no other teacher but the light". The latter phrase, a typically Quaker one, could well be Ames's one rather than Spinoza's, but if one recalls that in various places in his writings Spinoza himself resorts to such Quaker terminology¹²⁰, one has some reason to assume that it was Spinoza himself who described the reason for his being cast out by the Jews in terms of owning "no other teacher but the light".

Most importantly, Spinoza's critical view of the Scriptures is similar to the view Samuel Fisher expressed in his 1660 work. It would not be implausible to assume that Quaker views were one source of some of Spinoza's and de Prado's views, held by the authorities of the Jewish community to be "abominable heresies".

If we assume that Salomon van Til's 1684 report about a treatise Spinoza wrote, entitled "Apologetics of his Departure from Judaism" was correct and assume, furthermore, that chapter XIV of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* incorporates excerpts from it, then the traces of a Quaker influence on Spinoza's views during the excommunication period become remarkable: "But as to what God, or the exemplar of the true life, may be, whether fire, or spirit, or light, or thought, or what not, this, I say, has nothing to do with faith . . .", a phrase which employs some major Quaker terms¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

¹¹⁹ On Fisher see Popkin's paper and book (our note 116) and the references thereof.

¹²⁰ Popkin's paper on Spinoza and Samuel Fisher shows the important influence Fisher's 1660 work *The Rustick's Alarum to the Rabbies* had on Spinoza, as reflected in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*.

¹²¹ *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (our note 44), p. 187.

On the Quaker significance of the notion of "light", see, for example, *A Brief Dictionary of Quakerism*, published by the Friends Home Service Committee (London, 1958): "[T]he inward light": the light which shines in the darkness and shows us the way God would have us take".

Assuming that Spinoza had friendly relationships with Quakers in Amsterdam during 1655 and 1656, one would understand why the *ma'amad* and the *hakhamim* could become extremely concerned about Spinoza's activities. Their prudent policy was to avoid, by all means, participation of members of the community in any interreligious debates. To indulge in arguments with the Quaker mission must have been considered pernicious, collaborating with such a mission – even worse. Indeed, since such matters were regarded highly sensitive one should not expect related official decisions such as proclamations of excommunication to be detailed.

It seems, then, that the “Quaker connection” hypothesis has fared better than the “Karaite connection” one. What the *ma'amad* took to be Spinoza's “monstrous deeds” could be his meetings with Quakers, whether for religious debates or for some other intellectual collaboration. Those deeds were, indeed, of the type required for an explanation of the wording of the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication. They were different from acts of simply voicing or teaching his own theological or philosophical views of God, the soul and the Bible, and it is clear why the highly cautious authorities of the Jewish community would regard “monstrous” any intellectual relationships with the Quakers at the time: to oppose them might have meant to participate in religious debates between Christians and Jews, while to collaborate with them might have meant assisting them in their attempt to convert the Jews, both extremely undesirable predicaments, from the point of view of those Jewish authorities¹²².

Richard Popkin mentions Spinoza's use of Quaker terms in his *Tractatus* and quotes this phrase as well as another one, but does not note that they are both taken from chapter XIV of the *Tractatus*, which is assumed to be particularly related to Spinoza's views during the excommunication period.

The phrase we quoted from the *Tractatus* can, of course, be taken to include a Christian clause, namely “the exemplar of the true life”, but it may well be an addition Spinoza made while preparing the *Tractatus* for publication. Another sentence Popkin quotes from the same chapter of Spinoza's *Tractatus* does not lend itself to a similar analysis and could not have appeared in the original *Apology*: “He who firmly believes that God, out of the mercy and grace with which He directs all things, forgives the sins of men, and who feels his love of God kindled thereby, he, I say, does really know Christ according to the Spirit, and Christ is in him” (*loc. cit.*).

¹²² There was a third possibility and it was actually applied by Menasseh ben Israel: “He usually just explained the Jewish view on various matters, and explained it so that it does not necessarily or obviously contradict basic Christian claims”. Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676)* (Leiden, 1987), p. 103, but see also p. 200, note 40.

One may doubt whether this method was approved by the *ma'amad*, but be it as it may, they could not have entrusted Spinoza and de Prado with applying it under such sensitive circumstances, knowing what their theological and philosophical views were at the time.

XXVIII

We turn now to the last hypothesis we would like to consider in the present paper, the "Pre-Adamite connection" hypothesis. Here too the whole discussion could not have been possible, if not for Richard Popkin's fascinating works on Isaac La Peyrère, his life, work and influence¹²³.

Isaac La Peyrère put forward in his books various original and influential claims. Presently we are interested in at least two of them. One of these is La Peyrère's view that the Bible is inaccurate: "I need not trouble the Reader much further to prove a thing in itself sufficiently evident, that the first five books of the Bible were not written by Moses, as is thought. Nor need anyone wonder after this, when he reads many things confus'd and out of order, obscure, deficient, many things omitted and displaced, when they shall consider with themselves that they are a heap of Copie confusedly taken"¹²⁴. Indeed, this view reminds us of one of the views for which Spinoza and de Prado said they had been excommunicated. Secondly, we are going to ask ourselves whether the additional "monstrous deeds" of Spinoza, could be ones that involved La Peyrère's views or related activities.

La Peyrère's view that the Bible is inaccurate was set forth in much detail in his book *Prae-Adamitae*, published in five Latin editions (at least three of which in the Netherlands) during 1655 and in an English translation (also by a Dutch publisher) in the following year. Within a few years, the book was condemned by authorities of different civic and clerical types. Attempted refutations of it abounded.

Could Spinoza's excommunication have been related to the notoriety of La Peyrère's book? As usual, we have to consider various types of indirect evidence.

Menasseh ben Israel has been shown by Richard Popkin to be one of the very few thinkers of the time to have taken some of La Peyrère's ideas seriously. Although Menasseh ben Israel was interested mostly in La Peyrère's messianic views, rather than his biblical criticism, he was familiar with La Peyrère's works on both subjects. At the end of his 1656 *Vindiciae Judaeorum*, Menasseh ben Israel mentions a work of his, entitled *Refutatio libri qui titulus Praeadamitae*, as ready for publication. No doubt

¹²³ In this section we rely on Richard Popkin's book on La Peyrère (see our note 122) as well as on his papers, "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac La Peyrère, I", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, viii (1974), 59-63 and "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac La Peyrère, II", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, xviii (1984), 12-20.

¹²⁴ *Men before Adam*, book IV, ch. 1 (English edition [1656]), p. 208). See Popkin, *loc. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

Menasseh ben Israel was familiar with the work he at least intended to refute¹²⁵. It seems it would not be utterly implausible to assume that some information about La Peyrère or his views reached Spinoza through Menasseh ben Israel.

Spinoza himself owned a copy of a 1655 edition of the *Prae Adamitae* and though we have no evidence as to when he purchased or obtained it, it would seem unwarranted to exclude the possibility that Spinoza read La Peyrère's book before he was excommunicated¹²⁶.

Assuming that the views for which Spinoza was excommunicated were, at least to some extent, related to La Peyrère's Pre-Adamite theory, is there any related way of ascribing to Spinoza some additional deeds or activities, those "monstrous deeds" mentioned in the proclamation of his excommunication?

A possibility which suggests itself is related to a group of adherents of the Pre-Adamite theory which was formed in Amsterdam when the *Prae Adamitae* was published in 1655. In his *Anti-Prae-Adamitae*, published in Amsterdam 1659, Paul Felgenhauer reports that the author of *Prae Adamitae* had visited Amsterdam from the fall of 1654 to the spring of 1655. This visit and the ensuing publication of several editions of his book within a year seem to have provided the appropriate background for creating a group of intellectuals intrigued by La Peyrère's views. The existence of such a group is reported already by Samuel Desmartes in his *Refutatio Fabulae Prae Adamiticae*, published at Groningen in 1656. The 1743 Jesuit *Dictionnaire Universel* (de Trevoux) adds, in its "Pre-adamite" entry, that the group was in existence for a short time only¹²⁷.

Richard Popkin has recently pointed out the possibility that "Spinoza and his friends . . . may have constituted the sect of Preadamites that

¹²⁵ This work has never been found and one may wonder whether it was ever completely written.

¹²⁶ The above mentioned chapter XIV of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* does not seem to express La Peyrèrian views. Other parts of the *Tractatus*, which do seem to be related to La Peyrère's book (see Popkin, *op. cit.* [our note 122], p. 86) belong to a later period.

¹²⁷ It seems that on this point Richard Popkin has recently become less sceptical than he used to be. In his book *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (revised edn, Berkeley, 1979), Popkin mentions Descartes's report and the related "Pre-Adamites" entry in Diderot's *Encyclopedia*, and adds that the "claim about the sect has been repeated in later encyclopedias, though there is no evidence such a sect existed" (p. 220). It is not clear why a 1656 report about a 1655 group is no evidence at all. Perhaps the difference between an intellectual group and a "sect" is what gave rise to Popkin's remark. In any case, in his recent book on Isaac La Peyrère, it seems he admits that such a group did exist. No qualification accompanies his references to Descartes's report (p. 81 and p. 195) and to the *Universal Dictionary* of Trevoux (pp. 121-122 and p. 205) and elsewhere it is simply taken for granted (p. 87).

Desmarteas and others were so worried about''¹²⁸. If we assume that Spinoza and De Prado were members of a group, let alone a sect, of intellectuals who express in some public form their keen interest in the book *Prae Adamitae* and its theories, we can imagine the resentment felt by the *ma'amad* of the Jewish Portuguese community against its members being actively involved in what has already infuriated some of their Christian neighbors to the extent that the province authorities of Holland and Zealand condemn it, in a resolution dated 26 November 1655, for being against their interests. For the cautious *ma'amad*, public participation in such a scandalous affair constitutes "monstrous deeds". This is the "Pre-Adamite connection" hypothesis which suggests itself.

XXIX

We have discussed four "connection" hypotheses: a Cartesian, a Karaite, a Quaker and a Pre-Adamite. Having rejected the "Karaite connection" hypothesis, are there any reasons for preferring one of the remaining alternatives over the other two?

Notice, first, that all the three remaining hypotheses provide us with some explanation of another interesting detail in the proclamation of Spinoza's excommunication. Recall that the operative part of the proclamation instructs all members of the community not to "read any treatise composed or written by" Spinoza. What treatise had Spinoza already "composed or written"? And why "composed or written" rather than simply "composed"?

According to the "Cartesian connection" hypothesis those writings may have been philosophical works, either expositions "written" by Spinoza of philosophical works that had been "composed" by Descartes and expounded by Spinoza, or else ones "composed" by Spinoza himself, within the controversial Cartesian framework of philosophy. According to the "Quaker connection" hypothesis those writings may have included Spinoza's reply to the *ma'amad* and *hakhamim*, incorporated in part in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* or translations of Quaker tracts. According to the "Pre-Adamite connection" hypothesis those writings may have been parts of La Peyrère's *Prae Adamitae*, later to appear in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*.

Secondly, we would like to point out that those three "connection" hypotheses are, in a sense, compatible with each other. Spinoza may well have used, though in different ways, all these three sources of inspiration,

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

in developing his own views. Indeed, Spinoza and his friends can be easily imagined taking part in public discussions of Cartesian philosophy, Quaker views and the Pre-Adamite theory, as well as in similar ones.

QUEEN CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN AND MESSIANIC THOUGHT

SUSANNA ÅKERMAN

Queen Christina's moment of existential reversal at her abdication on 16 June 1654 occurred at a time when major political changes were awaited in Europe due to the solar eclipse that coming August. In Sweden the eclipses and the appearance of a comet gave rise to popular rumors about catastrophic indications and an impending war. In January 1653, the Danish Ambassador Juel reported: "For some time we have seen a star, that some think is a comet and . . . the bishop of Linköping relates that in the sky over the town an arm with a sword in hand was extended, that after a while turned into a man, complete and riding a horse. The man then fell to earth and was seen by many witnesses in a church yard, until he suddenly disappeared. The Linköping castle lord, Johan Gyllenstierna, obtained written testimony to the same effect"¹. These strange rumors were also heard at the Stockholm court. In a letter of 12 April 1653 to the astronomer Ismael Bouilleau, Christina's close friend and medical adviser Pierre Michon Bourdelot reported that the Swedes frequently consider almanacs and that in debates with the Queen some had raised the issue of the recent comet that had made such clamor in Germany². Earlier, Bourdelot had written to Claude Saumaise to have him send recent prints on the eclipse from France and Holland to the court in Stockholm³.

By thoroughly investigating a cryptic comment in Pascal's *Pensées*, Elisabeth Labrousse has recently uncovered a flood of pamphlets showing a widespread consternation over the eclipses of 1652 and the comet of 1653 that added to the conclusions that several millenarians, among them the Czech pansophist Jan Amos Comenius, drew concerning the year 1654⁴. Bourdelot's comments indicate that millenarian ideas also influ-

¹ Christian Molbech, "Peder Juul's otryckte brev till Charisius 1651-1655", *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, i (1844), 269-408, esp. p. 344.

² Elisabeth Labrousse, *L'Entrée de Saturne au Lion - L'éclipse de soleil du 12 août 1654* (The Hague, 1974), p. 23, n. 66.

³ A. Lemoine, E. Lichtenberger, *Trois familiers du Grand Condé* (Paris, 1909); Bourdelot to Saumaise, 24 May 1652, p. 272.

⁴ Labrousse, *L'Entrée*, p. 1. Pascal comments that there is no justice or injustice [in customary law?] that does not vary with the climate: "Trois degrés d'élévations du pôle renversent toute la jurisprudence, un méridien décide de la vérité; en peu d'années de

enced Christina, and it is possible that they modified her political self-understanding. The familiar Baroque image of Queen Christina as a "Minerva of the Parnassus" or a "Semiramis of the North" have obscured her own frequent political self-image as "an Agitatrix of Peace" and a female Alexander⁵. These themes of her image, of Peace and Universal Monarchy, are essential to the Catholic mythology she adopted as a new convert in Rome. Christina's attempt to be perceived publicly as notoriously persistent for peace and toleration flowed from her early role at Westphalia in 1648. But, as I shall show, her political actions after the abdication drew inspiration from a millenarian interpretation of the sacred destiny of Europe that probably also was the motivation for her attempt in 1656 to set herself up as the future monarch of Naples. At the time of her abdication, and also in her later life, Christina met with three messianists whose theories on the state of the last days are related: Isaac La Peyrère, Menasseh ben Israel, and Antonio Vieira. Their ideas seem to have been part of the context in which political observers understood Christina's role as abdicating prince, a context which also facilitated her own view of the abdication: as not only a sacrifice, but as an elevation to achieve a divine example for crowning her successor, and as such, an elevation that would have future political returns.

For general observers living in the spiritual climate of millenarianism, Christina's acts were not of the ordinary kind. An English letter of intelligence from Dort on 13 June 1653 exclaimed: "The Swede is the only politik Prince, foreseeing and making herself ready against the day of change"⁶. Then followed remarkable events: after Christina's abdication, "so much to despise the greatness of this world", and her secret flight "in habitus virilis . . . looked upon as a fantastic trick", came suspicion that along with her pro-Spanish politics, she was secretly negotiating with powerful pretenders such as the Prince of Condé, Cromwell, or Charles II⁷. Her acts and impious ways led observers to believe that she had "some great design in hand", and that "a Generall Peace will suddenly be ushered in by the Queen of Swedeland"⁸. In the propagan-

possession, les lois fondamentales changent; le droit a ses époques, l'entrée de Saturne au Lion nous marque l'origine d'un tel crime. Plaisante justice qu'une rivière borne! Véritez au-deçà des Pyrénées, erruer au-delà". (Brunschvige 294/Lafuma 60).

⁵ John Thurloe, *State Papers*, ed. T. Birch (London, 1742), iv. 39: a spy from Paris on 2 June 1655 relates: "Here is serious and fresh motion made of a general peace, in which the Queen of Sweden is very solicitous and active; but what that shall produce, I yet know not". For her role as "An agitatrix of Peace Generall", see 18 November 1656, Genoa: v. 580.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i: Dort, 13 June 1653.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, iv. 27: Brussels, 26 December 1654.

da surrounding the queen, the abdication had explicitly been staged as a transmission of the crown to Charles Gustavus (son of her father's sister and Johan Cassimir of the Palatinate-Zweibrücken) to help confirm his acceptance by Gustavus Adolphus's admirers, who now saw their fate in the hands of a new king accustomed to war. As witnessed by her commemorative coins for Charles Gustavus's coronation, the crown the ex-queen set on his head was extolled by the enunciation, "From God and Christina". The coin promoted the interpretation that her act of sharing her inherited fate with her chosen successor would wed the genealogy of her house to a sacred order of events⁹. By this emblematic license, her refusal to marry and her later conversion to Catholicism could be diplomatically exploited as part of sudden and unpredictable political change. It was such conditions that made Jean Chapelain claim, in a letter to Nicholas Heinsius in Stockholm, that if anyone was the Wandering Jew, it must be the queen's close adviser, the Spanish envoy Antonio Pimentel¹⁰. In her own circle this diplomacy was anticipated, as can be seen in the lyrical address of the Spanish resident in Copenhagen, Bernardino de Rebolledo, on the occasion of Christina's arrival in the house of the Jew Teixeira in Hamburg in 1654, to Juan de Prado, a Marrano two years later famed for his deist influence on Spinoza. Perhaps mockingly, Rebolledo expressed an attitude of his time when he tried to capture the character of the abdicated queen as an unexpected Messiah of the female gender: "De colera de pensar quan sin pensar a venido, el no esperado Mesias en genero femenino"¹¹. While such an attribution may at first seem merely tailored to meet Juan de Prado's ethnic understanding, a closer view of the queen's surroundings show that her involvement with Isaac La Peyrère's millenarian ideas can explain the enigma surrounding her public acts on her unexpected journey from Stockholm through Brussels and Innsbruck, to Rome.

THE CONJUNCTION OF SATURN AND MARS IN THE SIGN OF THE LION

The history of prognostics relating to Swedish politics begins with the revival of Tycho Brahe's prophecy occasioned by the super-nova of 1572. Brahe had spoken about how the new star would cause "great alteration

⁹ The coin is reprinted in Johan Arckenholtz, *Mémoires concernant Christine, reine de Suède pour servir d'éclaircissement à l'histoire de son regne et principalement de sa vie privée, et aux evenement de son temps civiles et literaires* (Leipzig & Amsterdam, 1751-1760), i. 415.

¹⁰ Jean Chapelain, *Soixante-dix-sept lettres inédits à Nicolas Heinsius (1649-1658)*, ed. Bernard Alain Bray (The Hague, 1965), Letter LI, p. 310: "Si l'Ulysse Juif n'est Pimentel je ne scay qui c'est".

¹¹ I.S. Revah, *Spinoza et Juan De Prado* (Paris, 1959), p. 157.

and turmoil in matters of Religion''. To the east it would bring bloodshed to the Moscovites and Tartars. He predicted the downfall of their tyrannical ruler Ivan the Terrible in the year 1583. To the south it would trouble the Spaniards, especially in the Netherlands and in the realm of religion. He argued further that the comet of 1577 would threaten the Holy Roman Empire. The Spanish would bring trouble in the Saxon circle, but would be counteracted by someone peace-loving arising in the sign of the Libra¹². Brahe calculated that the conjunction of 1603 with Saturn and Jupiter in Aries occurs only once in 800 years and he therefore concluded that it may be that "the eternal Sabbath of creation is at hand"¹³.

A newly kindled spread of Tycho Brahe's prophecy began around the time of the comet of 1618 when in England Alexander Gil printed his *The New Star of the North Shining upon the Swedish King* (1621)¹⁴. In 1624 the mentor of the Swedish king, Johannes Bureus, met with the Rosicrucian alchemist Joachim Morsius and from him received a German prophecy attributed to Paracelsus¹⁵. This cryptic prophecy spoke of three treasures hidden in the heart of Germany, in Silesia, and on the French-Spanish border, and told of a Lion of the North coming to save the Protestant cause. In part this drew on the prophetic imagery of the powers of the North spoken of in Daniel 11:5, Isaiah 41:25, Jeremiah 50:9, 4:5, Ezekiel 38:15, 39:2 and the third and fourth book of Ezra which now willfully was exploited by the Swedes for their campaigns of 1626¹⁶. In 1632 a reprint of Tycho Brahe's prophecy along with Paracelsus's text was spread by the Swedes to prepare the ground for their campaigns in Germany. At the end of the Thirty Years War the policy of preparing the lands of war with biblical analogies to the onslaught before the coming millennium had become a basic element of confessional politics.

Around the time of Christina's abdication, a similar outbreak of astrological pamphleteering started to draw attention to Hebrew chronology calculating that the span of 1656 years under Noah's covenant before the birth of Christ would repeat itself¹⁷. The prognostic on the eclipse of

¹² J.R. Christianson, "Tycho Brahe's German Treatise on the Comet of 1577", *Isis*, lxx (1979).

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

¹⁴ Alexander Gil, *The New Star of the North Shining upon the Swedish King* (London, 1621): modern reprint in the series of "The English Experience, Its Record in Early Printed Books", no. 801, Amsterdam, 1976.

¹⁵ Sten Lindroth, *Paracelsimen i Sverige till 1600-talets mitt* (Uppsala, 1943), pp. 171-179.

¹⁶ Johan Nordström "Lejonet fran Norden", *Samlaren*, xv (1934): first published in *De Yverbarnas Ö. Rudbeckstudier* (Uppsala, 1930).

¹⁷ On the calculations for the renewal of Noah's covenant in the year 1656, see for example, Christopher Hill, "Till the Conversion of the Jews", *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill* (Amherst, 1986), ii. 269-300.

12 August 1654 was published in the name of Andreas Argolin and had widespread repercussions as several millenarians saw it as a confirmation of their scriptural calculations on the year 1656. Argolin's prognostic was printed in several languages and carried the message that the darkening of the sun warned for an impending attack by the Turks on Europe, but that Antichrist in the form of the house of Habsburg would slow its advance in the two years and four months it would take for the eclipse to spin out its influence¹⁸. In 1656 there thus would be a sudden increase in catastrophes that would alter the entire political situation in Europe. After the reversal of rulers and the Turkish invasion, the infidels would convert and the unfaithful would be deluged by fire.

In the Netherlands, Abraham van Franckenburg's *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1651) was widely read and its arguments inspired millenarians to await the final dawn for the Messiah in the year 1655¹⁹. In France, the timing of the eclipse was politically interpreted by dissenters who since the Fronde awaited a time to act against the rule of Mazarin and the young Louis XIV. A remarkable outpouring of pamphlets for and against Argolin's argument ensued. Among them was l'Abbé de Cerizier's pamphlet *Examen de Jugement de l'Argolin sur l'Eclipse du mois d'Aoust de l'an 1654 A.M.D.C.*, which drew on the public horror due to the recent revolts and the beheading of Charles I in England and brought to attention Christina's recent abdication in June 1654²⁰. In England, in his *Monarchy or no Monarchy* (1650), William Lilly had considered that the Charles talked about in older prophecies may be a forthcoming Swedish king: "If this Queen marry one whose name be Charles, and she turn Papist, a thing very unlikely, then her husband may be the father or Predecessor of such a great Charles as [the Scottish Prophet] Grebner dreamed of"²¹. Queen Christina now was seen as embodying the sacred destiny of the Swedish Baltic Imperium and its attempts to preserve the Protestant quest of Gustavus Adolphus, who after his death at Lützen lived on as a semi-mes-

¹⁸ Pseudo-Argolin's pamphlet, pp. 4-5, in Labrousse, *L'Entrée*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁹ *Clavis Apokalypctica or a propheticall key by which the great mysteries in the Revelation of St. John and the Prophet Daniel are opened; it being made apparent that the Propheticall numbers come to an end with the year of our Lord, 1655. Written by a German Doctor and now translated out of high Dutch* (London, 1651): probably by Abraham von Franckenberg, it was circulated in Comenius's circle.

²⁰ Labrousse, *L'Entrée*, p. 23, n. 65.

²¹ William Lilly, *Monarchy or no Monarchy* (London, 1651), p. 29. Lilly earlier claims that the Fifth Monarchy men held that the Princess of Sweden was weak in 1650 and he further argued that God makes the Masaniellos and the Johns of Leiden (the former the Naples fisherman of 1647, the latter the Anabaptist at Münster, both popular rebels) into his instruments of vengeance, not a Cyrus or an Alexander. The tract seems to have been written to avert the idea of taking the Scot, King James, as "the one of the great house of the north that shall enlighten the whole world", p. 64.

sianic figure. His fate was remembered through the abundant use of pamphlets, gold-layered icon portraits, and his own emblem of a self-wounding white pelican, inspired from images of restitution found in the Old Testament understanding of history²².

THE VIEWS OF ISAAC LA PEYRÈRE

The most critical aspect of the divine drama that Queen Christina would meet in the millenarian writings of Isaac La Peyrère is the emergence of a political Messiah – an earthly ruler who will join the warring factions and set the major intents on spiritual preparedness. La Peyrère followed an age-old tradition, extended through Joachim of Fiore's remarks on the Apocalypse that the Third Age of the Spirit was to be expected. Candidates for the political Messiah were chartered through parallels of Scripture and political events, indicating that someone through fate and grace was extraordinarily chosen to create major political changes. In Christina's era self-proclaimed prophets appeared in such religiously diverse regions as England, the Netherlands, and Poland, to announce that they knew the course of events to come. The most well-known case may be Sabbatai Sevi, who in 1666 was accepted as the Messiah in most Jewish communities throughout Europe, including Hamburg where Christina's banker Manoel Teixeira and her medical doctor Benedict de Castro were prominent followers²³. Another case was that of the English Quaker James Naylor, who in the fateful year 1656 was hailed in Bristol as the Messiah by crowds shouting "Hosannah". At his trial, just before his punishment, a woman by name of Dorcas Embery, who claimed that Naylor had raised her from the dead, placed a crown on his head reading "The King of the Jews". The emergence of ordinary people with claims to spiritual dominion was seen as a serious threat to order and the faith: to the faithful such martyrdoms indicated the continual real presence of the redemptive hopes expressed in the Old Testament and were assimilated to Christ's sufferings: to the powerful these eruptions indicated the fragility on which their own claims for spiritual leadership rested. Accordingly, "the Jew and the Quack" were later portrayed together as imposters that had tried in an anabaptist vein to create a "monarchia nova"²⁴. In Sweden, under a peculiar challenge to Gustavus Adolphus's

²² One such icon portrait is now kept in the Skokloster Museum for Baroque Culture, while the pelican can be seen on the king's grave in Riddarholmskyrkan, Stockholm.

²³ Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi – The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 574-575, 583-588.

²⁴ Illustrations in M. Corvinus, *Der alten und neuen Schwärmer wiedertäuferischen Geist* (Cothen, 1701). Also as Zacharias Theobald *et al.*, *Historia von denen wiedertäufern* (Cothen, 1705).

authority, the commoner Matthias Pfennig had been imprisoned for proclaiming himself “Matthias Rex Judeorum, Israelitorum and Sueciorum” and for gathering rebellious followers in the name of “Matthias Leo der Nordenkönig”. In 1653, a year of famine in Christina’s Stockholm, a woman caused calamity by her claim to be queen in a future Kingdom of the Peasants, and a peasant leader adorned by a crown of iron was marched with his spike-club carried before him to his execution, after having caused an uprising with his claims to be titled “Chancellor of the Realm” and be regarded as the legitimate King of the Spirit²⁵. Although we do not know many details about the 1653 uprising in Stockholm – nine men were hanged in the gallows – it must have put a heavy strain on Christina’s rule, accused as she was of letting foreign libertines flood her court²⁶. These enactments of the messianic drama in the distant and immediate surrounding of the queen show the temper of the Christian world shortly before and after her abdication.

The dominant view, set out in the sixteenth century in Guillaume Postel’s writings and by the middle of the seventeenth century continued by Christina’s acquaintance Isaac La Peyrère, was that the political Messiah would be the most Christian king, “anointed by heaven and worker of miracles”, a bearer of the Lily, a descendant of Charles le Magne, the King of France. A tradition evolved that although this seemingly indicated Louis XIV, one ought to consider that at the time expected, 1655, Louis would only be about sixteen years old, and hence one ought to turn instead to Louis’s elder cousin who tried to seize France for himself, the military genius Le Grand Condé, Duc d’Enghien, Prince of Bourbon. It was especially telling that Condé’s father, the late Prince of Condé, had been born in 1588 – a year calculated to prefigure the final dawn²⁷. In a similar way, sixteenth-century Spanish writers, such as Luis de Leon and Gilles de Viterbo, had held that the conquests in the New World assured that the kings of the Iberian peninsula would provide the providential roleholder. In the cases of Gustavus Adolphus and Oliver Cromwell,

²⁵ Gunter Barudio, *Gustaf Adolf der Grosse* (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 281, 285; Nils Ahnlund, “Vem var Duken?”, *Historisk Tidskrift* (1938), 400. Molbech, “Juul”, pp. 346-347n, quotes Johan Ekeblad’s letters in *De la Gardiska Arkivet*, viii. 200: see also p. 349.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347n, quoting Johan Ekeblad’s letter *De la Gardiska Arkivet*, vii. 203.

²⁷ Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère – His Life, His Ideas and His Influence* (Leiden, 1987), ch. V, pp. 197ff. On the background of Gallic messianism see Marion Leathers Kuntz, “Guillaume Postel and the World State: Restitution and the Universal Monarchy”, *History of European Ideas*, iv (1983), 445-465, esp. pp. 446-450. On Condé’s role, see Richard H. Popkin, “Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac La Peyrère II”, *Studia Rosenthaliana*, xviii (1984), 12-20; *idem*, “Postel and La Peyrère”, in *Guillaume Postel 1581-1981*, ed. G. Tredaniel (Avranches, 1985), pp. 171-181.

not the depth of their tradition, but their unexpected success seemed to provide the basic argument.

A second aspect of the divine drama of the millennium was the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Only when the Jews have been recalled from their dispersion to the four corners of the earth can the time for the coming new age be ripe. In Isaac La Peyrère's mixed Jewish-Christian version of the millennial action plan, set forth in his *Du Rappel des Juifs* (1643), traditional Jewish messianism merged with Christian millenarianism to form a Marrano eschatology where the scenario was in practice a defense of the Jews. Like Postel, La Peyrère argued along a medieval Rabbinic idea that the prophecies speak of two Messiahs or universal monarchs, one of the house of David (Jesus Christ) and one of the house of Joseph. The latter is going to be God's instrument in preparing for the advent of the real Messiah. La Peyrère argues that a political Messiah with the right line of descent, the King of France, must gather the Jews in his land and treat them tolerantly so that they are likely to see the merits of converting. When the Jews convert to Christianity, they can be brought by the King of France to Jerusalem and there rebuild the Temple to signify the new age of the Spirit, the age of Christ. La Peyrère, who with Bourdelot belonged to the libertine circle of the Prince of Condé, uses the messianic image, but his political action plan as much works as a factual appeal for toleration of Jews and an ending of their persecution, as to the salvation of Christian believers. By arguing that Adam's sin pertains only to the Jewish people, and by drawing on Christian theology to argue that without the fall of Adam ultimate redemption would not have been promised, he shows that the Jews are indispensable for the salvation²⁸.

Richard H. Popkin has often mentioned Queen Christina's unusual appreciation of Isaac La Peyrère's theological system. La Peyrère's *Du Rappel des Juifs* is included in Isaac Vossius's bibliography for Christina's Antwerp library²⁹. As secretary to Le Grand Condé, La Peyrère had approached the queen by dedicating to her a copy of his description of Condé's victory in 1648 at *La Bataille de Lens*³⁰. On Condé's orders in 1654, he lived for at least a month in the neighboring house to Christina, at which time she is said to have financed the anonymous publication of La

²⁸ Richard H. Popkin, "The Marrano Theology of Isaac La Peyrère", *Studi Internazionali di Filosofia*, v (1973), 97-126.

²⁹ *Du Rappel des Juifs* is listed in Isaac Vossius's Antwerp catalogue of Christina's books: Popkin, "Menasseh", p. 13.

³⁰ Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barok* (Tübingen, 1952), p. 17. La Peyrère's tract on the battle at Lens is reprinted in Victor Cousin, *La Société Française au XVII^e siècle I – Etudes sur les Femmes illustres* (Paris, 1886), pp. 338-381.

Peyrère's heretical work *Prae Adamitae* (1655)³¹. By focusing on the statement in Romans 5:12-14, "But sin is not imputed before the law is", La Peyrère attempts to show that the biblical text itself assumes that there were men before Adam. Since René Pintard's studies of French libertinism it has been assumed that Christina's support of La Peyrère's doctrine on the relativity of Adam's sin was a mere outcome of her libertine circle at the Stockholm court. But as Professor Popkin has shown in great detail, a wider view of La Peyrère's concerns demonstrates that the theory of the Pre-Adamites was an integral part of La Peyrère's broader millenarian idea of a universal restitution. For La Peyrère it was clear that Noah's covenant at the dispersion of Babel was to be achieved, not simply by the restitution of the Scandinavian Hyperboreans, nor with the victory of Cromwell's Puritan Godly, but by the gathering in of the Jews – the only ones to whom, according to La Peyrère, Adam's sin truly applies and the only ones who by converting to Christ can abrogate God's curse.

CHARLES GUSTAVUS AND MILLENARIAN HOPES

Not long after the queen's departure from Stockholm, a messianic allegory was applied to the newly crowned Palatine Prince Charles Gustavus. One such statement was Theophilus Meinfreund's forecast for the year 1655³². Another was Simon Wollimhaus's strange millenarian chronology *Zwölf Lutherische Kirchen* (1655), which tried to strengthen the Lutheran faith of the new king³³. Wollimhaus's print was a shorter version of a six-volume longer work where he also divides history in twelve heart- and world-hours related to the millennium³⁴. Wollimhaus's book ends with a tripartite comparison of Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Catholicism in an attempt to fight back recent Calvinist and Catholic influence. The greater part of the work is a chronology of the world according to Scripture showing that the Old Testament figures from Adam and Eve, through Noah, and numerous kings from David through Joshua to the Goths, all were Lutheran in spirit. The twelve-section history ends with the ascent of the "tria miracula Gustaviana" – the first Wasa, the unparalleled Adolphus, followed by Charles Gustavus himself³⁵. The re-

³¹ René Pintard, *Le Libertinage Erudit dans la première moitié de la dix-septième siècle* (Paris, 1943), p. 399.

³² Title page reprinted in Sten Lindroth, *Svensk Lardomshistoria – Stormaktstiden* (Stockholm, 1975), p. 121.

³³ Simon Wollimhaus, *Zwölf Lutherische Kirchen der von der Anfang der Welt gewesen und bleiben müssen bis an der lieben jüngsten Tag* (Stockholm, 1655).

³⁴ *Ibid.* See the dedicatory introduction. No pagination.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

markable rainbows seen in the north and the east on the day of Charles Gustavus's coronation were taken as a divine sign for his coming ascendancy in defense of Lutheranism. Wollimhaus pointed to the Scripture's prophecy of how the northern powers would hide till the near end of the days (Zach. 6:8), and to the rainbow sealing Noah's covenant with God (Gen. 9:13), as well as to the biblical tales of the sun standing still and reversing its course (Josh. 10:13, 2 Kings 22:11). Now God through the honorable Queen Christina of the Roman "Reich" shortly before the end of the world had divided the land as foresaid in Daniel 2:41. Christina in her unprecedented role had rendered the land similar to the statue of iron with feet of clay. As we all live in the world's last quarter hour, it was time for Charles Gustavus to take initiative against the Papist sin-flood³⁶.

Charles X Gustavus's curiously rapid ascent turned a good deal of attention to his 1656 campaign in Poland. The Protestant cause in eastern Europe had a long legacy of desperate resistance to Habsburg power, and now suddenly it seemed to have a chance to prevail by divine intervention from the north. An English millenarian, Arise Evans, in 1656 had a conversation with another of Christina's acquaintances, the Jewish Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, from whom he learned about Isaac La Peyrère's recent theory that pointed to the King of France as the future political Messiah³⁷. When Evans pushed for Charles Stuart, Menasseh answered that the evidence made it far more likely that Cromwell or the Swedish king was the awaited political leader to unify Christendom. In return, Evans then confirmed his own nationalist ideas by pointing to medieval records proving that the King of England actually is the King of France. In a similar conjunction of allegiances, William Lilly in 1655 had professed in his Almanack for 1657 that the lord protector would join with the Swedish king, whom he now saw as unparalleled by any king, prince, people, or nation⁴⁰.

In November 1654, Comenius's associate Count Sadowsky reported that he had sent a work to Charles Gustavus which had completely altered the new king's carefree attitude⁴¹. The work had contained Mi-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁷ Popkin, "Menasseh", esp. p. 16; Christopher Hill, "Arise Evans: Welshman in London", in his *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1974).

³⁸ Folke Dahl, "King Charles Gustavus and the Astrologers William Lilly & John Gadbury", *Lycnos* (1937), 161-186.

³⁹ Milada Blekastad, *Comenius - einer Umriß von Leben, Werk und Schicksal des Jan Amos Komensky* (Oslo, 1969), pp. 141-148 and *passim*.

⁴⁰ Sven Göransson, *Den Europeiska konfessions politikens upplösning 1654-1660 - religion och utrikespolitik under Karl X Gustav* (Uppsala, 1956).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 198; George Huntston Williams, *The Polish Brethren - Documentation of the*

chael Drabicus's recent prophecy on the fate of Bohemia, which Comenius printed in the edition *Lux in Tenebris* (1657) together with Christopher Kotter's visions in 1620 and Christina Poniatowska's visions from 1628. The Swedish Church historian Sven Göransson has shown that millenarian themes played a major role in the Swedish attack on Poland in 1656, but he tends to treat these as propaganda methods and to concentrate on the cause of war and material considerations, such as a perceived need on the Swedish side to strike back against Russian interests in the area⁴². However, his documentation of the apocalyptic Protestant activity in England, Holland, and Poland relating to the Swedish-Polish war (and its influence on Christina's tutor Johannes Matthiae) is overwhelming, and he shows the wide spread of translations of Comenius's systematic millenarian tract *Panegyricus Carolo Gustavus* (1655). Here Comenius spurs on the Swede to help the cause of Siebenbürgen through attacking Habsburg influence in Poland and through strengthening the front against the Ottomans, to benefit the whole of Christendom. The Lion prophecy was now applied to Charles Gustavus who was seen to hold the Palatine providential role. But when Charles Gustavus in 1657 suddenly broke away from Poland to save his own nation from an impending Danish attack, the Protestant alliance stood blotted out. Brandenburg and the Cossacks switched sides, and Georg II Rakoscy was left to a total debacle that threw Poland into new massacres resembling those of 1648 when the Chielmienicki Cossacks migrating away from Russian territory had rampaged the Polish countryside. Instead, the Catholic King John Cassimir Wasa could triumphantly return to claim with providential certainty that the presence of the heavenly Queen of Poland, his spiritual betrothed, the Black Madonna of Chestochowa, had hindered the Swedish deluge.

MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AND THE SWEDISH QUEEN

The Polish war was directed through millenarian propaganda, and in Amsterdam, the millenarian Peter Felgenhauer published his *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (1655) where he saw an apocalyptic meaning in the Thirty Years War, the Chielmienicki pogroms of Poland (1648), and the recent comets of 1618, 1648, and 1652⁴³. Felgenhauer's views may have been influenced also by Queen Christina's role. In August 1654, Felgenhauer's friend Menasseh ben Israel had visited Christina in Antwerp to

History and Thought of Unitarianism . . . (1601-1685) (Montana, 1980), pp. 519, 545, 591.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 587-589

⁴³ Schoeps, *Philosemitismus*, p. 17.

collect money for his services to her. Menasseh published a panegyric to the queen, but no such money ever came forward. Menasseh instead learned of Isaac La Peyrère's millenarian ideas by borrowing Christina's copy of *Du Rappel des Juifs*. He probably also met Isaac La Peyrère in person, since La Peyrère on the Prince of Condé's orders lived in the house next to the ex-queen. On returning to Amsterdam, Menasseh had told Felgenhauer about Isaac La Peyrère and had proclaimed that the millennium was very near⁴⁴. The circumstances suggest that after the eclipses and the queen's unexpected abdication, her involvement in the Spanish Netherlands with the Prince of Condé for a general peace between France and Spain had been the decisive information.

Recently, David S. Katz has shown how Menasseh ben Israel's 1655 apology for resettlement of Jews in Oliver Cromwell's England was an outcome of the failed attempt to interest Queen Christina in sponsoring his comprehensive *Bibliotheca Rabbinica* that would also include the Stockholm holdings of Hebraica⁴⁵. Menasseh wrote that "the whole of Christendom was sighing to obtain" this catalogue and began to plan for a Spanish translation of the Talmud⁴⁶. Without mentioning Menasseh's millenarian theories, Christina's early biographer Johan Arckenholz (1751) conjectured that Menasseh's approaches, with a panegyric punning on the Hebrew words קֶשֶׁת *keshet* (the bow) and קֶסֶת *keset* (the quill) to conjure up an image of Christina as being in power of both pen and sword, was an attempt to open Sweden for Jewish immigration⁴⁷. However, in 1648 when the Swedish council had discussed the introduction of a Jewish trading family in Gothenburg, the State Chancellor had strongly opposed the settlement. It was Oxenstiern's opinion that the Old Testament had "a Jewish sourdough" that easily could spread among reformers with visions of a new Israel – to the detriment of centralized control⁴⁸. It is still conceivable that Jewish intellectuals assimilated the Swedish political conditions to their special interest in England, which they saw partly as territory for peaceful settlement and partly as ground for an important act in the historical unfolding of a messianic drama. The Ten Tribes, Genesis said, were to reappear shortly before the final return of the messiah. After a scholarly debate on the possibility that the

⁴⁴ Popkin, "Menasseh", pp. 12-14.

⁴⁵ David S. Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Queen Christina of Sweden, 1651-1655", *Jewish Social Studies*, xiv (1983), 57-72.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; A.K. Offenbergh, "Brief van Menasseh ben Israel aan Isaac Vossius, 2 februari 1652", in *Historische sprokkelingen uit de universiteit van Amsterdam aangeboden aan mevr. Dr. M. Feinwel* (1985), pp. 55-64.

⁴⁷ Arckenholtz, *Christine*, i. 304.

⁴⁸ De la Gardie in the council 8 November and 19 November 1667: Hugo Valentin, *Judarnas Historia i Sverige* (Stockholm, 1924), p. 24.

American Indians actually were the lost tribes of Jews mentioned in the Bible, attention was turned to the last remaining territories as yet unpopulated by Jews – the remote islands of England and Scandinavia. Settlement here would fulfill biblical prophecy on the dispersion of the Ten Tribes of Israel⁴⁹. Interestingly, in the address referred to above, Rebolledo (before introducing the idea of the advent of a female Messiah) mocks Juan de Prado by saying that only a delicious manna, a rosy dew, could convert him, provided that it be portioned out in equal abundance to the Ten Tribes: “Ni qu'en sabroso Mana se te convierta el rocío, de que puedas hazer plato a todos los doze tribus”⁵⁰.

In a correspondence in March 1651 with Christina's Greek tutor Isaac Vossius, Menasseh had proposed to commemorate to the queen either his main work *Conciliador o de la conveniencia de los lungares de la S. Escripura, entre si paracen* (Amsterdam, 1632-1651) that expounds scriptural prophecy and tries to reconcile the various inconsistencies found in the Bible, or his *Nishmat Chajim. De Resurrectione de los Muertes* (1636), a treatise on the immortality of the soul, developing the doctrine that only the just are resurrected. He had sent the queen all his printed works and proposed to travel through Germany and Italy to obtain Hebrew manuscripts for Christina's growing library⁵¹. Menasseh's attempt to commemorate the *Conciliador* with Christina's name is interesting. The *Conciliador* is a complicated work which utilizes 210 Hebrew and 54 Greek, Latin, Spanish and Portuguese sources to show that the proposed inconsistencies of the Bible all can be rendered plain with correct exegesis. Authorities such as Euripides and Vergilius, Plato and Aristotle, Augustine, Albertus Magnus and Duns Scotus are cited along with the Zohar and the Midrash, Maimonides, Leon Hebreo, Nachmanides, Paul de Burgos and Nicholas de Lyra, Isaac Luria and Moses Cordovero. As the sheer length of this list of Greek and Jewish philosophers, poets and kabbalists indicates, the work is a gigantic attempt to bring philosophical thought, Christian and Jewish, to the problem of biblical interpretation. Grounded in Jewish traditional reasoning, the work also introduces kabbalist methods and apocalyptic projections. There is however no correspondence to show that Menasseh's interest in Stockholm was part of his millenarian belief that the Jews must be accepted by the Christians in order for the age of the Messiah to begin. Such an intention can only be gleaned from his later dedications. When after her abdication Christina

⁴⁹ Popkin, “Menasseh”.

⁵⁰ Revah, *Spinoza*, p. 157.

⁵¹ Hugo Valentin, “Drottning Kristina av Sveriges Judiska förbindelser”, *Festschrift ... to David Simonsens*, ed. J. Fischer (Copenhagen, 1923), pp. 213-237.

could not meet her financial undertakings, Isaac Vossius had to pay out of his own pocket for the Hebrew manuscripts Menasseh already had sent. Menasseh then dedicated to Vossius one of his most outspokenly messianic tracts on the revelations of Daniel, *Piedra Gloriosa o de la Estetuta de Nebuchadnesar* (Amsterdam, 1655). Vossius's copy contains four etchings by Rembrandt, illustrating four main images on how the holy stone, first appearing in a vision of Ezekiel, in the book of Daniel signifies the Messiah: 1) the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, a statue whose two legs representing Romanism and Mohammedanism are soon to be crushed by a stone (Dan. 2:31-35); 2) Daniel's dream of the four beasts representing the four kingdoms of antiquity: Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome (Dan. 7:1-14); 3) Jacob's dream of the ladder: Jacob sleeps on a stone and sees three angels representing three lost monarchies preceding a restituted Jerusalem (Gen. 28: 11-15); 4) The slaying of Goliath by Daniel, representing the triumph of the Messiah over the temporal world⁵². Menasseh no longer had any use for the queen in his own visions of the future, and so in September 1655 he left Amsterdam for England on his more famous project to obtain the readmission of the Jews to England.

CHRISTINA'S CONVERSION – A POLITICAL STATEMENT

Christina secretly converted to Catholicism in Brussels on Christmas Eve, 1654. John Thurloe's spy ring reported, sensationally, that she now was offered to participate in peace negotiations in Paris, on condition that the Prince of Condé was left out. According to Condé's own records, she had promised him assistance to storm Bordeaux with burning ships. In a remarkable proceeding she instead managed to alienate him publicly by insisting on a higher seating than his. A year later in Rome she did the same to her Spanish advisers by ignoring their appropriate place in her court ceremony. Obsessed with the Alexander image and styling herself as the spiritual daughter of the Pope, she took the name "Christina Alexandra" at her confirmation in Rome in 1655, after having proceeded through the triumphal arch on the Piazza del Popolo. Its entrance had been sealed since the passage of Charles V, Emperor of the Realm, on his last visit to Rome, but was now opened for the queen by Pope Alexander VII. The arch, redesigned by Bernini, is topped by the star and mountains of the Chigi weapon and celebrates the queen's arrival in

⁵² Reprinted in H. van der Waal, "Rembrandt's Etchings for Menasseh ben Israel's *Piedra Gloriosa*", in *Steps towards Rembrandt – Collected Articles 1937-1972* (Amsterdam, 1974), pp. 113-124.

the eternal city with the inscription: "Felici. Fausto Q. Ingressui. Anno Dom. MDCLV"⁵³. But after only six months in Rome, Christina made a public journey to Paris on a planned attempt to exploit her status as unbound royalty for the future French expedition to seize Naples – a Spanish domain.

A year later, Isaac La Peyrère also converted to Catholicism and publicly retracted his views on men before Adam. He now wrote the *Lettre à Philotine* (1658) where he explained his conversion as fitting with his projection of Pope Alexander VII to be the ultimate unifier of faiths. Using a prevalent image, he wrote that the Pope would act as once Alexander the Great did in conquering foreign lands and creating a unified world⁵⁴. Before his election, Cardinal Fabio Chigi had served as a diplomat at the peace negotiations at Westphalia and at the end of his eighty-day conclave his assumption of the papacy came to be regarded as providential. Under Alexander VII's auspices, Rome was rebuilt, a league against the Turks on Crete was formed, and a Hebrew translation of St. Thomas Aquinas's works was begun. Isaac La Peyrère could thus use the image of a political Messiah in connection with the millenarian hopes for an Angelic Pope perpetrated by Spanish mystics since the Marrano theologian Luis de Leon's prediction that the new Catholic age would begin in 1656⁵⁵.

ANTONIO VIEIRA IN SERVICE TO THE QUEEN

Millenarian aspects of Catholicism at least became familiar to Christina with her employment of Antonio Vieira as her personal penitentiary in Rome, beginning in 1674. Vieira's millenarian attitude was shaped by the songs of Bandarra, the poetry of the Sebastian tradition in Portugal. In 1578 at the battle of Alkazar (where the Portuguese lost their independence to the Habsburgs), King Sebastian disappeared, generating the legend that he one day would return and restore the glory of the Portu-

⁵³ Pintard, *Libertinage*, pp. 399, 420. For Christina's relation to the Duke of Condé and Isaac La Peyrère's diplomatic role see Duc D'Aumule, *Histoire des Princes de Condé pendant les XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* (Paris, 1892), vi. 698-708. For the triumphal arc see Cesare D'Onofrio, *Rom val Bene un'Abiura – Storia Romana tra Cristina di Svezia, Piazza del Popolo e l'Accademia d'Arcadia* (Roma, 1976), pp. 52ff. It was Pope Alexander VII's proposal that she would style herself as "Christina Maria Alexandra", but in fact Christina never used the middle name. See also Arckenholtz, *Christine*, ii. 55-56: introduction to "Réflexions de la Reine Christine sur Alexandre le Grand".

⁵⁴ Popkin, "Marrano Theology", esp. p. 123 notes 74 and 75.

⁵⁵ Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (Rotterdam, 1697): s.v.; Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes – From the Close of the Middle Ages* (St. Louis, 1952), xxxi: Alexander VII (1655-1667), ch. i; Karl Kottman, *Law and Apocalypse: The Moral Thought of Luis de Leon (1527-1591)* (The Hague, 1972).

guese people. The Sebastians elaborated the idea to conceive the return of the Portuguese king as an earthly Messiah who would unite the Portuguese and all other nations to form a millennial kingdom and together with an Angelic Pope fight the Turks and convert the Jews⁵⁶. An example of these ideas can be found in Lorenzo di Banco's ironic statement, *Bizzarie Politiche ouer raccolta delle pinndabili Pratiche di Stato, nella Christianita* (Franecker, 1658). Inserted between a list of secret instructions directed to Christian Jesuits "per arrivar alla Monarchia Brumata" and a description of the basic liberties of Venice, is a "Manifesto della regina di Suezia" reporting Christina's statement of conversion with special mention of her Spanish advisers Pimentel, Terra Nova, and Antonio Della Cueva. Then follows a chapter on the popular revolt in Portugal against the Spanish monarch and Don Juan IV of Braganza's election as "Vox Populi, Vox Dei". Finally the book ends with a chapter called "Avertimento sopra il questo Pronostico Porthogese". Here the total millenarian scenario is presented from the Portuguese viewpoint and among other judgments on European politics the author remarks: "Il Re di Suezia, benche tra tutti i Settentrionali sia un Re potentissimo, e quasi nato alla guerra". As "Capo d'Heresia" he would be "una Peste enemico capitale, della santissima Chiesa"⁵⁷. Banco's example of Jesuit millenarian views comes close to Antonio Vieira's position on the subject.

Vieira's national messianism took form in his *Historia do Futuro, esperancas de Portugal, Quinto Imperio do Mundo* (1649). The timing for the new dawn was progressively set first at the conventional points 1656 and 1666; later Vieira argued for 1670, then for 1679, finally for the year 1700. One of Vieira's sermons bears a dedication to Christina and is a millenarian exegesis on the title image *Cinco Pedras da Funda de David* (1676) describing how David employed five virtues in defeating his enemy: self-knowledge, the overcoming of sorrow, the repentance from sin, fearlessness, and hope for the future. Antonio Vieira, who had met Menasseh ben Israel in Amsterdam in 1649, seems to have adopted the rabbi's vision in the *Piedra Gloriosa* of seeing the stone crush the iron statue of clay, not usually a sign of Anti-Christ, but of the Messiah bringing in the Fifth Monarchy⁵⁸. During his time in Christina's circle, Vieira in

⁵⁶ A.J. Saraiva, "Antonio Vieira, Menasseh ben Israel, et le cinquième empire", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, vi (1972), 24-56, esp. pp. 26ff. Also Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim di Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976), pp. 132-135, 166-167. Cf. I.S. Revah, "Les Jésuites Portugais contre l'Inquisition: La Campagne pour la fondation de la Compagnie du Brésil", *Revista do Livro*, i (1956), 29-53.

⁵⁷ Lorenzo di Banco, *Bizzarie Politiche ouer Raccolta delle pinndabili Pratiche di Stato, nella Christianita* (Franchera, 1658).

⁵⁸ E. Carel, *Vieira - sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1879), pp. 342-362, esp. pp. 347ff.; Saraiva, "Vieira", p. 40ff.

1675 was condemned for "Judaizing" opinions, but his criticism of the Inquisition and its treatment of "New Christian" Jews prevented any *Auto-da-Fé*-burnings to take place between 1674 and 1681 while the issue was being discussed⁵⁹. In 1679 Christina wanted to hire him again and the Jesuit General Oliva called upon Vieira to fulfill the request, but Vieira now stated that he had to go to Brazil to complete the preparations for the coming dawn by missionary works among the Indians⁶⁰.

MILLENARIANISM AS AN ELEMENT IN CHRISTINA'S FAITH AND POLITICS

While Christina was personally involved with millenarian thinkers, only a few of her written statements relate to theories on universal monarchy and they unfortunately date from her last years. A typical one ironically states: "Il y a dans notre siècle une terreur panique si universelle, repandue dans le monde que ce cela fait [presque] juger que l'univers attend un Maistre, mais ie ne voy nul des viuant capable de l'estre, si lon ny destine le gran Turque". Her notes on this theme have for the most part been regarded as curiosities, but one can now perhaps see a larger pattern that can explain also some other of her anomalous activities, such as in 1686, when Christina wrote a manifesto calling herself the "Protetora delli miserabili, delli oppressi et attriti" of the Hebrew Ghetto in Rome⁶¹.

In 1686 Christina had read Richard Simon's forged mocking letter purportedly written by the rabbis of Amsterdam. They congratulated the Calvinist writer Pierre Jurieu for his argument that the future of the Church depended on the conversion and acceptance of the Jews. He was mockingly called the prophet of Judaism in Christianity. Christina now wanted to have his book and others with the same argument. Jurieu's lengthy commentary, *L'Accomplicement des Propheties ou la delivrance prochain de l'Eglise* (1686), interprets the Catholic persecution of the Huguenots as the wake of the 1260 days prophecized in Revelation, and that therefore the reign of the Antichrist, the Papacy, will shortly come to an end. In the preface he appealed to a recent trend in Rome – Molinos's quietism, a purist and monistic mysticism condemned by the Inquisition – that Christina had also accepted: "Never was there so many in the Church

⁵⁹ C.R. Boxer, "Antonio Vieira S.J. and the Institution of the Brazil Company in 1649", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, xxix (1949), 474-497; *idem*, *A Great Luzo-Brazilian Figure Padre Antonio Vieira, S.J. (1608-1697)* (London, 1957).

⁶⁰ Arckenholtz, *Christine*, ii. 141. The Jesuit General Oliva's letter reprinted in *Cartas do Padre Antonio de Vieira*, ed. Lucio d'Azevedo (Lisbon, 1971).

⁶¹ Marginal addition no. 408 in Sven Stolpe, *Drottning Kristina – Maximar – Les Sentiments Héroïques* (Stockholm, 1959), p. 119; Valentin, "Drottning", pp. 233-234.

of Rome as now, who acknowledge the vanity and impurity of their superstition. Since it is freely confessed that the *adoration* of one God is sufficient without that of the *Saints* and *Images*, they must shortly conclude, that for things unnecessary they ought not Scandalize one half of the *Christian World*; and shut the Gate against the Iewes and the Mahometans''⁶². Christina's quietist period, and her interest in arguments for concord and toleration of Jews, thus seem to have had millenarian overtones.

The millenarian context perhaps also sheds light on the opinion related in 1680 by the Italian court musician Pietro Reggio, formerly at work in Christina's Stockholm court. Reggio told the English diarist John Evelyn that the reason for the queen's abdication had been her intent to set herself up as ruler of Naples – a plan that thus would have been conceived already before leaving Sweden⁶³. Evelyn's remark raises questions about Curt Weibull's study of Christina's Naples plan and her infamous murder of Monaldesco after his betrayal of it in 1657. Weibull has consistently argued that France used the ex-queen as an instrument for gaining control in southern Italy. It should be noted, however, that the letters of Mazarin clearly state that the plan was initiated by Christina herself. Some facts surrounding the Stockholm court seem to concur with Evelyn's story. The Danish Ambassador Juel mentions that there were "Italian rebels" at Christina's court in 1651 and one knows that a member of Christina's Stockholm academy, the young scholar Nicholas Heinsius, had been an eyewitness to Masaniello's Naples revolt in 1648⁶⁴. The Bourdelot library, which Christina incorporated in her Roman collection, did not only contain the controversial philosophy of Pomponazzi and Campanella, but also Campanella's political plan for a temporal universal kingdom modelled on the Dominican revolt in Naples at the turn of the century – presented first in Spain and then to the French Dauphin, his *Monarchia Messiah* (1634).

Furthermore, the Bourdelot collection contained a treatise on Portuguese millenarian Sebastianism and two relations on the politics of Naples, one on the conditions in 1578 and one, particularly relevant

⁶² Christina to the Amsterdam book merchant Beaumont, Montpellier collection, tome 14, p. 172. On Jurieu's book, see also Schoeps, *Philosemitismus*. Pierre Jurieu, *The Accomplishments of Scripture Prophecies or the Approaching Deliverance of the Church* (London, 1687).

⁶³ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. S.D. De Beer (Oxford, 1955), vi. 220-221: 23 September 1680.

⁶⁴ Curt Weibull, *Drottning Christina och Monaldesco* (Stockholm, 1936); Molbech, "Juul"; F.F. Blok, "Nicholas Heinsius in Naples (april-juli 1647)", *Verh. d. Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde* (Amsterdam, 1984), esp. pp. 32-33.

here, is the manuscript *Facilita con laquale il regno Napoli puo liberarsi e dar-segli un re del sangue reale di Francia*⁶⁵. The document shows that ideas similar to Isaac La Peyrère's had been applied to the case of Naples in the circle of Condé very early on and through Bourdelot also in Queen Christina's court. Christina's abdication highlighted her role as unbound sovereign and this new position was essential in her negotiations for the central political position in Naples. However, a new throne – where she again could be a maker of providential kings – was perhaps the hidden reason behind Christina's secret contact with Mazarin. In the agreement she had proclaimed that as she never would have any descendants, she would at her death hand over the throne of Naples to a French dauphin. Any interpretation of Christina's Naples plan must at the present time remain speculative, but as I have tried to show, there are several unaccounted-for millenarian aspects of Christina's life that cannot be reconciled with the traditional view of either her religious development or her political intention as an unbound monarch. The evidence at least indicates that we need to modify the received explanation, recently expressed in Cecare d'Onofrio's words, that Rome was simply worth an abdication⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Elisabeth Pellegrin, "Catalogues de Manuscrits de Jean et Pierre Bourdelot. Concordance", *Scriptorium*, xxi (1986), 202-232: Items 322, 363, 358 1/2. Also relevant is item 365.

⁶⁶ Onofrio, *Rom val Bene un'Abiura*.

A PHILO-SEMITIC MILLENARIAN ON THE
RECONCILIATION OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS:
HENRY JESSEY AND HIS "THE GLORY AND SALVATION
OF JEHUDAH AND ISRAEL" (1650)*

ERNESTINE G.E. VAN DER WALL

All who are acquainted with the man to whom this volume is presented know his eminent qualities in a wide range of fields, one of them being his remarkable ability to discover hidden treasures in archives and libraries all over the world. Manuscripts generally believed to have been lost for good, books presumed to have vanished out of existence, seem to prefer to lie quietly in their boxes or stand inconspicuously on the shelves, until Richard Popkin comes along to rescue them.

Thus during the very first minute of my first meeting with Professor Popkin, while shaking my hand he fired his first question at me – the beginning of a long series extending over the years – whether I was aware that a copy of the Serrarius-Bahnsen auction catalog had been preserved in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel: he had just located it there. Petrus Serrarius being the subject of my dissertation, I had of course been looking for this catalog, which was believed to be lost. My many inquiries (among them one directed to the Herzog August Bibliothek) had not led to any positive results. Evidently the reappearance of this rare item awaited Popkin's arrival. This copy is the only one known of this important seventeenth-century auction catalog, which lists an interesting collection of mystical and millenarian writings¹.

Viewed against the background of Popkin's golden touch, one can imagine that I am happy to present to him here a discovery of my own, also made among the abundantly rich collection of the Herzog August Bibliothek. Through this small treasure we enter the world of Popkin's well-known seventeenth-century millenarian friends, notably two of them: Henry Jessey and Petrus Serrarius. Both these Christian theologians figure in his many interesting and stimulating studies on the history of millenarianism and philo-Semitism. I want to deal here with a treatise by

* I thank Dr. C.W. Schoneveld (Leiden) for his kindness in correcting the English text of my paper.

¹ An edition of the auction catalog of Petrus Serrarius and Benedictus Bahnsen is being prepared by R.H. Popkin and the author of the present article.

Henry Jessey, entitled *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel*, published in 1650, which at the time seems to have been a celebrated work. Unfortunately, however, copies of the English edition are no longer extant. But in 1653 there appeared a Dutch translation of Jessey's treatise, made by his intimate friend, the Amsterdam mystical millenarian Petrus Serrarius, entitled *De heerlickheydt en heyl van Jehuda en Israel*. Of this translation only one copy seems to have been preserved: the one I came across in Wolfenbüttel². Already around the middle of the nineteenth century the Dutch translation was noted as being very rare³. It was this translation that Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel referred to in Paul Felgenhauer's *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* and in his *Humble Addresses* to Oliver Cromwell⁴. How and when Jessey and Serrarius got acquainted, is not known. Perhaps they were introduced to each other by mutual friends, such as John Dury, Nathaniel Homes, or Menasseh ben Israel. They corresponded regularly. After Jessey's death, Serrarius continued to correspond with Jessey's friends – among them Anthony Grey, whom he informed about the exciting events around the Jewish "King" Sabbatai Sevi and his "Prophet" Nathan of Gaza⁵.

According to Jessey's seventeenth-century biographer Edward Whis-

² The full title of the Dutch translation runs as follows: *De heerlickheydt en heyl van Jehuda en Israel, zijnde een tractaet streckende tot vereeniginge der Jooden en Christenen (die al te langh in te groote oneenigheyt zijn geweest) mits aenwijsende hoe sy beyde in veele fundamentele grond-stucken der religie, insonderheydt noopende den MESSIAM eens zijn: wiens eygentlijke persoon, alhoewel de hedendaeghsse Iooden verloochenen, hoe lijckewel hun eyghen oudste en meest-geaprobeerde authereen, door klaer ghevolgh, in Hem over-een-stemmen. Betuyght in 't Engelsch door Henry Jesse, genaemt een Christen-predikant tot Londen (alhoewel hy hem-selvs deses titels onwaerdigh acht) en nu tot gherief beyde van Iooden en Christenen in 't Neêrlandts vertaelt door P.S.. Gedruckt tot Amsterdam, in 't jaer onses Messiae, Iesus Christus, 1653. (HAB shelf-mark 916.2Th.[3]).*

Jessey's *Glory and Salvation* and its Dutch translation are mentioned in such eighteenth-century works as J.F. Corvinus, *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticarum Pantheon* (1702), p. 234; and J.C. Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea* (Hamburg, 1733), iv. 501.

H.-J. Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Tübingen, 1982), mentions *The Glory and Salvation* only once (p. 2 n. 2); Jessey, however, deserves a more prominent place in the history of philo-Semitism, as is apparent from the studies by R.H. Popkin and David S. Katz, and will appear from the present paper.

³ See N. Sokolow, *History of Zionism 1600-1918* (London, 1919), pp. 214-215, where reference is made to a catalog of the library of Leon V. Saraval (Trieste), published in 1853, listing Jessey's treatise as item number 619, with the addition "très rare".

⁴ Paul Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (Amsterdam, 1655), p. 90. For the reference in the *Humble Addresses*, see below p. 169 and note 32.

⁵ On 4 December 1665 Serrarius wrote a letter to Anthony Grey, in which he referred to "the blessed memory of our dear friend Mr. Jessee, whom I might have wished to communicate what now I shall communicate unto you", see E.G.E. van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en zijn wereld* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 416, 419, 428-432. See also E.G.E. van der Wall, "A Precursor of Christ or a Jewish Impostor? Petrus Serrarius and Jean de Labadie on the Jewish Messianic Movement around Sabbatai Sevi", in *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, xiv (1989), 109-124.

ton, *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel* had also been translated into Hebrew and "dispersed among the Jews of Divers Nations"⁶. But of this translation no copies have been preserved either – maybe they will be discovered one day (by Popkin?), to be included in the inventory of seventeenth-century Hebrew translations of Christian treatises⁷.

Jessey's treatise bore the imprimatur of four famous divines: John Dury, Joseph Caryl, William Greenhill, and Nathaniel Homes. Dury expressed the wish that the tract might be spread among all Jews in the whole world, while Homes stated that he believed that this treatise would be most profitable for Jews and gentiles alike⁸.

Since through the Dutch version we are now finally in a position to know what Jessey must have written, my main purpose here will be to give a survey of the contents of this translation⁹. As we shall see, *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel* stands out as one of the most philo-Semitic works of the seventeenth century. But let me first say a few words about its author.

HENRY JESSEY (1601-1663)

Henry Jessey played an important role as a millenarian theologian and "pastor in politics" in seventeenth-century England¹⁰. For a long time, from 1637 until his death, he served the Jacob-Jessey Church in London, the mother congregation of the English Baptists. He was among the most prominent Independent clergymen of his day and is considered as the foremost representative of "respectable nonconformity". Jessey was deeply involved in politics: he wanted to take the political implications of his millenarian beliefs seriously. He sided with the radical Fifth Monarchy Men, but was one of their moderate members.

⁶ [Edward Whiston], *Life and Death of Mr. Henry Jessey* (London, 1671), pp. 80-81.

⁷ See R.H. Popkin, "The First College for Jewish Studies", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, cxliii (1984), 351-364, p. 360. See also R.H. Popkin, "Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological Interchanges in Holland and England 1640-1700", in *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. van den Berg and E.G.E. van der Wall (Dordrecht & Boston, 1988), p. 14: "Part of what is needed to follow out Jewish-Christian influences in the period is an inventory of Christian writings in Hebrew, to ascertain what audiences these were addressed to, and what influence, if any, they may have had".

⁸ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, "Approbatie deses boecks", noting that Greenhill, Caryl and Homes were members of the "national synod" of Great Britain (= the Westminster Assembly). For these divines, see, i.a., Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark, London & Toronto, 1986), pp. 71, 106f., 112.

⁹ Whiston, in his *Life and Death of Mr. Henry Jessey*, pp. 79-80, gives a neat survey of the contents of *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel*.

¹⁰ For Henry Jessey, see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; R.L. Greaves & R. Zaller (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the 17th Century* 2 (Brighton, 1984), pp. 140-141; B.R. White, "Henry Jessey. A Pastor in Politics", *Baptist Quarterly* xxv (1973-1974), 98-

According to his contemporaries, Jessey was a gifted preacher. One of his moving sermons on the future glory of the Jews occasioned the conversion of a young girl, Sarah Wight, who, on her way to the Thames to drown herself, went instead to hear Jessey preach. Then, at last, this "empty nothing creature" was freed from her tormenting doubts and feelings of sinfulness; learning from Jessey that the Jews, the most despised people in the whole world, were to be saved by the Lord some future day, suggested to her that she herself, also being very sinful though not as much as the Jews, might be saved too. The story about Sarah Wight, her excessive fasting, her famous visitors (among whom were Benjamin Worsley and Lady Katherine Ranelagh), was written down by Jessey in a book, entitled *The Exceeding Riches of Grace*, soon to become very popular. In this work – which was also translated into Dutch by Serrarius – he expressed the hope that God would "shortly . . . bring down every high thing"¹¹.

Jessey was highly interested in the Jews and their religion, belonging as he did to the Anglo-Dutch circle of philo-Semites in the early modern period¹². By contemporaries he was nicknamed "Jessey the Jew"¹³. He was known for his skill in Hebrew, which he seems to have read easily. He always carried a Hebrew Bible with him¹⁴. The major project of his

110; *idem*, "Henry Jessey in the Great Rebellion", in *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent. Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Nuttall*, ed. R. Buick Knox (London, 1977), pp. 132-153; *idem*, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1983), *passim*; B.S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in 17th-Century English Millenarianism* (London, 1972), *passim*; Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion: the Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640-1660* (The Hague, 1973), *passim*; B.W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, 1975), pp. 109, 111, 125, 231; M. Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge, 1977), *passim*; D.S. Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Christian Connection: Henry Jessey and the Jews", in *Menasseh ben Israel and His World*, ed. R.H. Popkin, *et al.* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 117-138. A portrait of Jessey has been preserved in the Dr. Williams's Library, London: shelf-mark MS 38.186.(6).

¹¹ On Sarah Wight and *The Exceeding Riches of Grace*, see Van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius*, pp. 126-130; Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Christian Connection".

¹² On this group, see E.G.E. van der Wall, "The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists", in *Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Van den Berg & Van der Wall, pp. 73-94. See also E.G.E. van der Wall, "Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel to John Durie: English Philo-Judaism and the *Spes Israelis*", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, lxi (1985), 46-63; *idem*, "Johann Stephan Rittangel's Stay in the Dutch Republic (1641-1642)", in *Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Van den Berg & Van der Wall, pp. 119-134; David S. Katz, "Henry Jessey and Conservative Millenarianism in Seventeenth-Century England and Holland", in *Dutch-Jewish History*, ii (1989), 75-93.

¹³ See B.S. Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs 1500-1800* (London & Boston, 1979), p. 153.

¹⁴ See Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Christian Connection"; Popkin, "Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological Interchanges", p. 25.

life was a new Bible translation, intended to replace the King James Version. In his *Scripture Almanack* he explained the Hebrew calendar and used the Hebrew names of the months. He observed some Jewish laws, and kept the sabbath on Saturday, believing in Jewish fashion that "the Lords *Sabbaths* begins on the *Evening* before"¹⁵. It is no wonder then that in the 1650s Jessey played an active role in the campaign to re-admit the Jews to England¹⁶. He was a member of the special committee attending the Whitehall Conference of December 1655 where the re-admission question would be determined, and from his pen came the most reliable report about it, the famous *Narrative of the Late Proceeds at White-Hall Concerning the Jews*. When in connection with this campaign the "ambassador" of the Jews, Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, visited England, it was Jessey who "stage-managed Menasseh ben Israel's English production and publicised it once it was underway"¹⁷. Menasseh and Jessey had been in contact with each other at least since 1649. Jessey, like Homes, corresponded regularly with the Amsterdam rabbi, as we shall see below; one of their letters, inquiring whether the Ten Tribes of Israel were to be found in America, was published by Menasseh in Felgenhauer's *Bonum Nuncium Israeli*¹⁸.

Furthermore, Jessey was closely involved in the Anglo-Dutch project to collect alms for the poor Ashkenazi Jews in Jerusalem. This project is a good illustration of the active philo-Semitism of Jessey and his friends. Serrarius, who apparently was the promoter of the collection in the Netherlands, kept his English friend informed about the results of the project and the whereabouts of the emissaries of Jerusalem, among whom was Rabbi Nathan Shapira, who visited the Netherlands in 1656 and 1657¹⁹. When, early in 1658, a new couple of emissaries came to Amsterdam, Serrarius wrote to Jessey that he was "much mooved" by their stories about the plight of their brethren in Palestine. A second collection was organized, Serrarius asking Jessey to do his best in England. At Serrarius's request, Dury and Hartlib were informed by Jessey about "the

¹⁵ See David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 10) (Leiden, 1988), p. 22.

¹⁶ See David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), *passim*; *idem*, "Menasseh ben Israel's Christian Connection".

¹⁷ Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Christian Connection".

¹⁸ Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium Israeli*, pp. 103-105.

¹⁹ See R.H. Popkin, "Rabbi Nathan Shapira's Visit to Amsterdam in 1657", in *Dutch-Jewish History*, i (1984), 185-205; Van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius*, pp. 176-184. On this collection and its effects among the Jerusalem Jews, see David S. Katz, "English Charity and Jewish Qualms: The Rescue of the Ashkenazi Community of Seventeenth-Century Jerusalem", in *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*, ed. A. Rapoport-Albert *et al.* (London, 1988), pp. 245-266.

great distresse of these poor blind Jews'', Jessey signing his letter as ''one that longs to see Jerusalem made a Praise in the Earth''²⁰. Undoubtedly he had a hand in the publication of an anonymous pamphlet about this relief of the Ashkenazi poor in Jerusalem, entitled *An Information Concerning the Present State of the Jewish Nation in Europe and Judea*²¹.

As was the case with all the seventeenth-century philo-Semites, the interest in the Jews was closely connected with the belief in the future reign of Christ upon earth. Jessey was convinced that he lived in the last times, seeing around him many signs to confirm him in this. A collection of prophecies included in the *Clavis Apocalyptica ad Incudem Revocata vel Clavis Recusa*, published in 1653, bore the imprimatur of Jessey and Caryl²². Furthermore, Jessey is supposed to have been the author, or co-author, of the anonymous *Mirabilis Annus, or the Year of Prodigies and Wonders*, a ''faithful and impartial collection of several Signs'', which appeared in 1661 and 1662, and led to his imprisonment on account of their anti-government tenor²³.

Jessey also showed great interest in the successes of the Protestant mission of his day, remembering the words of St. Paul about the fulness of the gentiles to come in, so that all Israel may be saved (Rom. 11:25). In 1650 he published an English translation of a pamphlet of the Dutch pastor Caspar Sibelius about the conversion of 5900 East-Indians in the Isle of Formosa²⁴.

According to his biographer, Jessey ''was not only a Talker of God, but (like Enoch) a Walker with God''²⁵. We may add that he was not only an active philo-Semite, but also a theorist on the conversion of the Jews, as will appear from *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel*.

²⁰ See the postscript to Serrarius's letter to Jessey, dated 22 March 1658, Brit. Lib., MS Lansdowne 754, f. 372. See also Van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius*, pp. 178-180.

²¹ As to the identity of the author of *An Information*, it is unclear whether Jessey or Dury was the author. C. Roth and D.S. Katz choose the first, Popkin the last option. However this may be, in a sense Petrus Serrarius may be considered as its co-author, the *Information* largely consisting of a letter of Serrarius to Dury.

²² Ball, *A Great Expectation*, p. 125, n. 254.

²³ On this work, see Ball, *A Great Expectation*, pp. 111-115.

²⁴ Henry Jessey (trans.), *Of the Conversion of Five Thousand and Nine Hundred East-Indians in the Isle of Formosa* (London, 1650). On this treatise, see Ball, *A Great Expectation*, pp. 109-110.

²⁵ Whiston, *Life*, p. 32.

THE GLORY AND SALVATION OF JEHUDAH AND ISRAEL

What occasioned the publication of *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel*? In the Preface, addressed to "the remnant of Israel, which will be delivered by the Messiah from all who oppress it and to all who look forward to this deliverance", Jessey indicated that it had been the acquaintance with Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and his works which had led him to publish his views on the Jews. He had already been busy collecting material on the calling of the Jews for many years. In his introductory letter to *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall*, a tract by the Fifth Monarchy Woman Mary Cary (Rand), published a year later, he let the reader know that he had frequently been greatly refreshed in his spirits, "for above twenty yeers, with the consideration of the GLORIOUS STATE and PRIVILEGES of the NEW JERUSALEM that shall be on earth, and the certainty thereof foretold by the Prophets and Apostles"²⁶.

The *Glory and Salvation* is dedicated to the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam and more in particular to Menasseh ben Israel. Jessey recounts that he had read the rabbi's writings with great pleasure, especially his *XXX De Creatione Problemata*, and his three "excellent" treatises, *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, *De Termino Vitae*, and the one on "the restauration of the world", the *Spes Israelis*, as well as some parts of the *Conciliador*. He had been curious to know whether Menasseh was still alive and, having been informed that this rabbi was living in Amsterdam, Jessey had felt compelled to make known to the Amsterdam rabbi, as well as to the Jews in general, his compassion for their miserable state. He desired to comfort them with the sure hope that one day they would be restored to great dignity, honor and glory, together with a great multitude of gentiles.

Jessey had started to correspond not only with Menasseh but also with the Portuguese community and its elders, his letters having been translated by one of his Jewish friends "into the language you speak" – probably Portuguese or Spanish. Menasseh had replied in a long letter that they had been very happy to receive his letters and that he hoped that the Jews and Jessey would understand the restoration of Judah and Israel in the same way. Thereupon Jessey had written to Menasseh that he desired to publish all knowledge he had acquired in the course of time contained in the law and the prophets concerning the glory and salvation of Jehudah and Israel. The publication of his work, however, had taken much longer than he had thought. Although his days were less filled than those of Menasseh, who, as he had written to Jessey, worked twelve

²⁶ See Mary Cary, *The Little Horn's Doom and Downfall* (London, 1651). On her work, see Ball, *A Great Expectation*, pp. 66, 119 n. 208, 187, 188, 190.

hours a day doing his regular work (eight hours reading the Talmud in the synagogue and four hours working in the printing-house) plus one hour in the "Academy", yet Jessey himself was such a busy man that he had not been able to finish his work earlier²⁷. Moreover, the translator (Serrarius) had been very occupied as well. But now finally Jessey was happy to present his treatise to the Amsterdam Portuguese Jews, expressing his hope that the days might be near wherein "ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23).

Evidently Menasseh and Jessey corresponded regularly. Unfortunately we only know the few lines Jessey sent to the Amsterdam rabbi in a postscript to a letter by Nathaniel Homes, written on 24 December 1649²⁸. At any rate, Menasseh sent Jessey his *Spes Israelis*, a personal gift which Jessey knew how to appreciate: he read it avidly and made a great number of notes and annotations²⁹.

The Glory and Salvation aims at reconciling Jews and Christians. Jessey's way to attain this end is to show to the Jews – as well as to his fellow Christians – their agreement in fundamentals of religion, especially concerning the Messiah, "whose proper person though they deny to this day, yet, as appears by their own most antient, and most approved Authors, by evident reduction they concenter in"³⁰. And this is precisely what his treatise is about: by his frequent reliance on Jewish sources – Talmudic, rabbinic, and kabbalistic – Jessey wants to prove to the Jews that their own authorities support the Christian views about the Messiah.

²⁷ Menasseh's working schedule mentioned by him in one of his (lost) letters to Jessey may be compared with that referred to by him in a Spanish letter to an unknown correspondent, written in January 1648: "Two hours are spent in the Temple every day, six in the School, one and a half in the public Academy, and the private one of the Senhores Pereyra, in which I have the office of President, two in the corrections of my printing-press, which all passes through my hands. From eleven to twelve I give audiences to all who require me for their affairs and visits. All this is precise, judge then how much time remains for domestic cares and to reply to the four or six letters which come every week, of which I keep no copy, for the time fails me". (see E.N. Adler, *About Hebrew Manuscripts* [London, 1905], pp. 67-77).

²⁸ See note 18. The correspondence of Nathaniel Homes with Menasseh ben Israel seems to be no longer extant either. For the prominent millenarian theologian Ho(l)mes, see Ball, *A Great Expectation*, *passim*.

²⁹ Jessey's copy of the *Spes Israelis* has been preserved in Dr. Williams's Library (shelfmark 3008 D 22) (Katz, *Philo-Semism*, p. 33). C. Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (3rd edn, Oxford, 1964), p. 156, is not wide off the mark in saying that the publication of *The Glory and Salvation* was occasioned by Menasseh's *Spes Israelis*, though clearly this was not the only cause of its publication.

³⁰ See [Whiston], *Life*, p. 79, apparently a quotation from the title-page of the English edition.

The tract, which consists of twenty-four chapters with a subdivision into eighty sections, can be divided into four parts. First Jessey deals with the eight privileges and the three crowns of the Jews which they possess above all other nations on the earth (chs. 1-2). Secondly he tries to show the excellence of the Messiah above all other kings of Israel (chs. 3-8). In the third place the necessity of the Messiah being both God and man is discussed (chs. 9-12), while lastly Jessey confronts six objections that could be made concerning the Messiah, for example as to his future visible reign upon earth (chs. 13-24).

Jessey starts off with a long exposition about the Jews being the most privileged nation in the world. No nation, no kingdom, has ever possessed such royal privileges as Israel: the Jews are God's son, even his first-born (Ex. 4:22); they have been given the ark; it is with their forefathers that the Lord has made a covenant; Israel has received the Torah; and while other nations did not know the Lord nor the right way to honor him, He showed his word to Jacob and his statutes to Israel (Ps. 147:19); Israel has received the Lord's promises and blessings (in this connection Jessey refers to the *Sefer Reshit Chokhmah*, an influential kabbalistic work by Cordovero's pupil Elijah de Vidas), and it has the most renowned forefathers that any nation can boast of³¹. It is this proof of Israel's excellence that won Jessey Menasseh's praise: the reason why the rabbi did not want to talk at length to Cromwell on the "nobility of the Jews" was the fact that, as he stated, "that point is enough known amongst all Christians, as lately yet it hath been most worthily and excellently shewed and described in a certain Book, called, *The Glory of Iehudah and Israel*, dedicated to our Nation by that worthy Christian Minister Mr. *Henry Jessey*, (1653. in Duch) where this matter is set out at large"³².

The most glorious privilege of the Jews is the promised Messiah, the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), the light of the gentiles (Is. 42:6), by whom and for whom all things were created (Col. 1:16, 17), as is acknowledged by "Hebrew doctors" too³³. He, the seed of the woman, will bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15), and will restore the image of God that Adam possessed before the Fall, this restoration being the aim of the first creation, as the Christians as well as some Jews, such as Menasseh ben Israel, believe³⁴. In a lengthy exposition, Jessey tries to show

³¹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. I, sect. I-VII, pp. 1-8. For Elijah de Vidas, see *Ency. Jud.*, xvi. Jessey also refers to R. Maimon's "treatise of repentance".

³² Menasseh ben Israel, *Humble Addresses* (London, 1655), p. 23.

³³ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. I, sect. VIII-IX, pp. 9-10; ch. IX, sect. XXXV, p. 57; ch. X, sect. XXXVII, p. 63. In connection with the "Hebrew doctors" reference is made to R. Menachem's explanation of Gen. 3 and Lev. 25.

³⁴ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. I, sect. IX, pp. 10-11. References are made to R. Mena-

that the Messiah excels all other kings, judges and heroes which Israel has known hitherto. To him are given three glorious crowns: those of the priesthood, the law and the kingdom³⁵. He will come to gather the Jews from all quarters of the earth, and very soon too – we know that Jessey thought it probable that the Jews would be converted before 1658³⁶. Israel has now been “many days without a king, and without a prince Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king” (Hos. 3:4, 5), that is, according to R. Jonathan, the Messiah³⁷.

As Jessey was chiefly set on converting the Jews to Christianity, it was only natural that he should want to prove that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah. His method, however, is rather unusual in Christian conversionist literature. His argument is mainly based on Old Testament texts and Jewish authorities. His treatise abounds with references to Talmudic, rabbinic and kabbalistic works. One of his main sources is *Gali Razaya*, a voluminous kabbalistic work written in 1552-1553 by an unknown author, which was widely read in the early seventeenth century and might have played some role in the messianic ideas of the followers of Sabbatai Sevi. The work is attributed by Jessey to “the teacher called R. Ha-Kodosh”³⁸. Jessey not only shows his skill in Hebrew and Judaic literature, but also his deep respect for Jewish authorities. Although there was a great interest in Jewish literature in seventeenth-century Christian learned circles, this did not always imply respect for it; on the contrary, it sometimes led to scorn for the Jewish tradition. But among philo-Semitic millenarians, Jessey is one of the few who relies so frequently upon “Hebrew doctors”.

It comes as no surprise that Jessey repeatedly attempts to prove that

chem’s explanation of Gen. 3, Targum Jerusalem, and Menasseh ben Israel, *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, 1.3 c. 6.

³⁵ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. I, sect. X, pp. 11-15; ch. II-VIII, sect. XI-XXXI, pp. 15-51. References are made to, i.a., R. David Kimchi’s *Sefer Serashim*, R. Elijah de Vidas’s *Sefer Reshit Chokhmah*, R. Jonathan ben Uzziel, R. Abba, R. Aser, R. Isaac Arama, R. Nathan, R. Ha-Kodosh, R. Moses Ha-Darshan, R. Yose Ha-Galili, R. Solomon Iarchi (= Rashi), R. Maimon, Midrash Shir Ha-Shirim, Midrash Koheleth, Midrash Tehillim, and Genesis Rabbah.

³⁶ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. I, sect. 10, p. 15. See his introductory letter to Mary Cary’s *Little Horn’s Doom and Downfall*, where Jessey says that the conversion of the Jews will take place “probably before 1658”.

³⁷ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. III, sect. XXIV, pp. 30-31. Reference is also made to Menasseh ben Israel, *De Termino Vitae*, 1. 3.

³⁸ On *Gali Razaya* (= *Revealed Mysteries*), see *Ency. Jud.*, x. 546; G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676* (London, 1973), pp. 61-65. This work is doubtfully attributed to Abraham Ha-Levi Berukhim. It is said to be among the more original creations of the *kabbalah*. Jessey must have seen it (or parts of it) in manuscript, since part of it has been printed only in 1812. The whole work is extant (Oxford MS 1820).

Jewish authors, such as Yose Ha-Galili, Jonathan ben Uzziel, Moses Ha-Darshan, Joshua ben Levi, R. Ha-Kodosh, and "Solomon Iarchi" (= Rashi) explain a great number of Old Testament verses in a messianic sense. For example, Exodus 15:3, Psalms 72, 89, and 100, Isaiah 7:14, 8:1, 9:6, and 11:2, Jeremiah 23:5, 6, and Hosea 3:4, 5, refer to the Messiah according to these Jews³⁹. Jessey's procedure is to mention first the messianic interpretation of scriptural passages by Jewish authors and then to prove that the Messiah referred to in those verses can be none other than Jesus Christ – a conclusion which is drawn also on the basis of Jewish sources. Naturally he is only too happy to be able to refer to Jewish authorities who explicitly refer to Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Thus in connection with the well-known text Genesis 49:10 ("The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be"), Jessey quotes the saying of Rabbi Ha-Kodosh that the Messiah, because he will deliver mankind, is called "Jesjua", but that another nation will call him "Jesju". That is the reason, still according to this rabbi, why one finds this name hidden in "יבא שילה וְלֵךְ", which, by combining the first letters of these words, contain the name "Jesju"⁴⁰. Jonathan ben Uzziel also maintains that "Shiloh" refers to the Messiah⁴¹. To this Jessey adds that the Messiah is the only one who merits the title of "Jesjua", Redeemer, because he will deliver Israel from the hands of its oppressors, not only from "the Roman monarchy" – Jessey does not conceal his anti-papal attitude – but of any king that has ever oppressed the Jews⁴¹. The Messiah is the one "that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah [= Rome]", who will bring down the strength of their enemies to the earth, because the day of vengeance is in his heart and the year of his redeemed is come (Is. 63:1, 4). Although Israel's sins are as scarlet (Is. 1:18), their bones as dried, and their hopes seem lost, yet they will be revived from the dead, be restored and filled with joy,

³⁹ See *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. IX, sect. XXXII, XXXIII, XXXVI. In connection with Ex. 15:3 Jessey refers to Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 20:1, R. Abba, and R. Moses Ha-Darshan. In connection with Ps. 72 reference is made to R. Maimon, R. Solomon Iarchi (= Rashi). In connection with Ps. 89 he refers to R. Nathan, R. Moses Ha-Darshan and R. Abba. As to Is. 8:1 and 9:6 reference is made to R. Yose Ha-Galili and to R. Ha-Kodosh. In connection with Is. 7:14 and 9:6 Jessey refers to R. Ha-Kodosh, R. Jonathan ben Uzziel, and R. Yose Ha-Galili. As to Is. 11:2 he refers to the Talmud and R. Simeon ben Iochai. As to Jer. 23:5, 6 reference is made to R. Jonathan ben Uzziel and R. Joshua ben Levi.

⁴⁰ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. IV, sect. XXVI, p. 36.

⁴¹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. V, sect. XXVII, p. 39.

⁴² *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. IV, sect. XXVI, p. 37.

because their Redeemer the Messiah is Jahweh, who will work this, and who shall let it? (Is. 43:13)⁴³.

Jessey then goes on to demonstrate that the Messiah is necessarily God (אל) and man (איש). In order to be able to deliver Israel it is necessary that the Messiah is יהודה איש מלחמה, "a man of war" (Ex. 15:3), אל נבחר (Is. 9:5), because all men are as filthy rags (Is. 64:6)⁴⁴. However, in order to redeem mankind, and Israel in particular, he must also be a man, a brother of Israel: the Redeemer shall come to redeem that which his brother sold (Lev. 25:25), a text which according to Midrash Tanchuma is often explained as referring to the Messiah⁴⁵. Jessey quotes Rabbi Ha-Kodosh who says that the Messiah, in so far as he is God and man, will be called Immanuel (Is. 7:14)⁴⁶.

As to the Messiah's humanity, Jessey observes that the way in which he was conceived was unlike other men. Reference is made to R. Moses Ha-Darshan's explanation of Psalm 85:12, supporting the idea of the Messiah's unique conception. Of course, the much debated text Isaiah 7:14 ("Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel") is brought forward⁴⁷. This verse, says Jessey, does not refer to the son of Achaz, but to the Messiah, as is stated by R. Ha-Kodosh (in *Gali Razaya*'), R. Moses Ha-Darshan and R. Joden⁴⁸. Jessey expounds first that the meaning of עלימה refers only once in the Scriptures to an apparent virgin (Prov. 30:19); in all other texts, however, the word refers to a true virgin (Ex. 2:8; Gen. 24:43; Cant. 1:3; 6:8; Ps. 60:26)⁴⁹. Secondly, since it should concern a sign, that is, a miracle, it can only be called such when a virgin conceives a child. And thirdly, the belief in the wonderful conception of the Messiah is to be found with R. Ha-Kodosh, R. Moses Ha-Darshan and R. Simeon ben Yochai, the author of the *Zohar*⁵⁰.

Thus God has endowed the Messiah with all he needs to enable him to deliver Israel. However, it is prophesized that the Messiah will only perform this great work after the Lord has put him to grief and has made his soul an offering for sin. In his explanation of "the suffering servant of the Lord" (Isaiah 53) – read by Christians as a reference to the suf-

⁴³ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. V, sect. XXVII, p. 40; ch. IX, sect. XXXV, p. 59.

⁴⁴ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. IX, sect. XXXII-XXXV, pp. 51-59.

⁴⁵ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. X, sect. XXXVII, p. 62f.

⁴⁶ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. IX, sect. XXXIV, p. 55-56.

⁴⁷ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XI, sect. XXXVIII, p. 64f.

⁴⁸ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. IX, sect. XXXIV, p. 54f.; ch. XI, sect. XXXVIII, p. 65. Reference is made to R. Shlomo.

⁴⁹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XI, sect. XXXVIII, p. 66f.

⁵⁰ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XI, sect. XXXVIII, p. 67f.

fering Jesus – Jessey mentions the messianic interpretation of this chapter by R. Jonathan ben Uzziel, R. Moses Ha-Darshan as well as in tractate Sanhedrin⁵¹. That the Messiah had to suffer the death penalty is also explained by R. Simeon ben Yochai and R. Ha-Kodosh, who says that the Messiah will save the tribe of Adam by his death and will deliver the souls from hell, which is the reason that he will be called "Jesus"⁵². Jessey gives a long quotation from the Talmud and from Yalkuth, where God is said to have made a covenant with the Messiah: the Messiah will suffer in order to save all mankind, but this he will do on only one condition, namely that none of Israel may perish, neither of the living nor of those who died since Adam's time⁵³.

It is in connection with the suffering of the Messiah that Jessey puts forward the first objection which could be made with regard to the Christian belief in the Messiah. This concerns the question how the suffering of the Messiah can be reconciled with his glory⁵⁴. Though Jessey refers to the Jewish theory of the two Messiahs – the son of Joseph, the suffering Messiah, and the son of David, the glorious Messiah – he hastens to point out the remarkable fact that the Talmud and the Midrash, R. Jonathan ben Uzziel and R. Ha-Kodosh as well as R. Simeon ben Yochai, talk about *one* Messiah and believe that the suffering and glory have to be ascribed to the Messiah to whose coming Israel is now looking forward⁵⁵. This is also in accordance with the view of Rabbi Yoshua ben Levi, who, wondering how one could reconcile Daniel 7:13 ("the Son of man will come with the clouds of heaven") with Zechariah 9:9 ("the king will come lowly and riding upon an ass"), quoted the explanation of Psalm 126:1 ("When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream"). This verse refers to the time of the war of the Messiah ben Joseph, who will refuse to help the sons of Israel. During that period the Jews will be like those that dream. But when the Messiah will reveal himself, their mouth shall be filled with laughter and their tongue with singing (Ps. 126:2). Then they will acknowledge his first coming on the basis of this coming, and all will say "the Lord hath done great things for us" (Ps. 126:3). So, while some Jews adhere to the belief in two Messiahs, others believe in two comings of one Messiah, and that because, as Judah de Modena says, Scripture mentions only one Messiah⁵⁶.

⁵¹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XII, sect. XXXIX, p. 69f.

⁵² *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XII, sect. XXXIX, pp. 70-71.

⁵³ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XII, sect. XXXIX, pp. 71-76, where reference is made to a saying of R. Yose (in the Talmud) and to Yalkuth [Simeoni] on Is. 20.

⁵⁴ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIII, sect. XL-XL, pp. 77-81.

⁵⁵ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIII, sect. XL, p. 78.

⁵⁶ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIII, sect. XI, p. 78-81. Jessey also refers to the explanation in Genesis Rabba of Gen. 49.

As to the coming of the Messiah, one may well ask at what time this will be. Many Jewish authors maintain that according to the Scriptures the Messiah would come before the destruction of the Second Temple. According to R. Jonathan ben Uzziel, R. David Kimchi, R. Akiba and others the text "I will fill this house with glory" (Hag. 2:7) refers to the King Messiah; this had to happen after the destruction of the First Temple and before the destruction of the Second. The explanation by R. Jonathan Onkelos, R. Moses Ha-Darshan and R. Ha-Kodosh of Genesis 49:10 is advanced to support this view: the scepter has been taken away from Judah some forty years before the Second Temple was destroyed, namely when Herod the Great had the Sanhedrin killed, except for one. Then, according to Sanhedrin, people cried out "The scepter has been taken from Judah". Since then no judgment of souls has taken place, which was only allowed to be given in "Gazeth", that is "Lishkath Hagazith" ("the Chamber of Hewn Stones"), a chamber in the Temple building from which they had been driven⁵⁷.

Furthermore, the "everlasting righteousness" which would come after seventy weeks (Dan. 9:24), is a reference to the Messiah, according to such authorities as R. Moses Ha-Darshan, R. Berekyah and R. Moses ben Nachman (Nachmanides). Seventy weeks are to be taken as 490 prophetic days, although, as Jessey remarks, this number is a matter of dispute in these last times. According to Moses ben Nachman "the most Holy" this verse refers to the Messiah and not to King Cyrus or Zerobabel, a view which is supported by Saadiah Gaon and others. Moreover, this is evident from the verse itself, as is shown by Menasseh ben Israel in his *De Termino Vitae*. One can also read there that the Jews carried weapons against the Romans no longer than seventy weeks or 490 days, because they thought that then the Messiah would come. In that time "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Dan. 9:27). This prophecy has been fulfilled: up till now no sacrifices have been made by the Jews, as Menasseh points out, referring to Hosea 3:4. In this connection Jessey adds Menasseh's contention that the Jews reject the "eating" of blood⁵⁸.

Jessey then proceeds to demonstrate that all rabbis acknowledge that the time in which the Messiah would come, has been long past. He refers to the Jewish Prophecy of Elias, which so deeply influenced the Protestant apocalyptic tradition. According to Rabbi Elias the world would last three periods of 2000 years each: the first period before the law, the second under the law, and the third under the Messiah. In the Talmudic

⁵⁷ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIV, sect. XLII, pp. 82-85.

⁵⁸ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIV, sect. XLIII, pp. 85-88.

tractate *Avoda Zara* it is clearly expressed by R. Jacob that the time of the Messiah's coming has been long past, the first period of 2000 years having ended in Abraham's days, the second when Jerusalem was destroyed. Furthermore, R. Elias has revealed to R. Judah (the brother of R. Sela Ḥasida) that the world will endure no less than 85 jubilees, and that in the last jubilee the son of David will come. And since one jubilee numbers fifty years, this period of 85 jubilees = 4250 years is also long past. Maimonides in his letter to the Jews in Africa tells them that there was an old tradition among his forefathers which promised that the Messiah would come in the year of the world 4474, which, again, is also long past. And does not Menasseh ben Israel say in his *Spes Israelis*: "Although the Messiah were lame, he might have come by this time"⁵⁹?

One might ask whether the time of the coming of the Messiah is postponed because of the sins of the Jews. Some answer this affirmatively, others deny it because, as they say, when God mentions a specific time, He keeps his promise, because He is true and good. Several examples are mentioned by Jessey to show that the Lord's promises have always been fulfilled at the appointed time. Thus he quotes R. Joshua ben Levi's explanation of Isaiah 60:22 ("I the Lord will hasten it in his time"), which according to this rabbi would mean that the redemption will be hastened if Israel deserves it, but if not, that it then will come at the promised time. Jessey reproduces also the well-known disputation between R. Joshua ben Levi and R. Eliezer on the coming of the Messiah, the first trying to demonstrate to the latter that it will not be delayed in spite of Israel's sins⁶⁰.

The belief that the Messiah would come some forty years before the destruction of the Second Temple is supported by the mystery in Isaiah 9:6 concerning the "increase of his government", where a ם, a closed "mem", is put in the middle of the word (לְמַרְכָּה). This "ם" stands for 600 years, which refers to the period from King Achaz till the end of the reign of Herod the Great. Evidently Jessey does not follow Menasseh's interpretation of this mystery, as put forward in the *Spes Israelis*⁶¹. Other Jewish authorities are adduced to confirm this view about the Messiah's

⁵⁹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIV, sect. XLIV, pp. 88-89. On R. Elias's prediction about the 85 jubilees, see A.H. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (Boston, 1927), p. 27. For Menasseh's saying, see the *Spes Israelis*, sect. 29.

⁶⁰ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XV, sect. XLV-XLVI, pp. 90-96. On this disputation, see Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation*, pp. 201-202.

⁶¹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XVI, sect. XLVII. Menasseh explains this "mystery" contained in Is. 9:6 as referring to the view that the time of the Fifth Monarchy shall be hidden, till the time when it shall begin (*Spes Israelis*, sect. 28). A Christian version of Menasseh's interpretation is to be found with Petrus Serrarius, who says that the closed "mem" refers to the hidden way in which Christ's glorious kingdom is expanding. See

coming, for example, R. Moses Ha-Darshan's explanation of Isaiah 66:7, "Before she travailes, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child", which means: "before he will be born who will bring Israel in captivity, her Redeemer will be born". Now, the captivity under the Romans has been the greatest, so the Redeemer had to be born before the birth of Titus. This is in accordance with R. Jonathan ben Uzziel's comment on this verse, while numerous rabbis (among them R. Natronay, R. Ha-Darshan, and the sons of R. Hiyya) acknowledge that the Messiah has come at that time, confessing their belief in his miracles⁶².

In order to show that Jewish authors place the resurrection of the Messiah three days after his death, Jessey quotes Flavius Josephus's comments on Jesus in his *History of the Antiquities of the Jews*, and also the sayings of R. Ulla, R. Yoḥanan, R. Moses Ha-Darshan, and R. Ha-Kodosh on the Messiah's resurrection⁶³.

From this point onward the subject matter of *The Glory and Salvation* slightly changes: having sufficiently proved, or so he thinks, that the promised Messiah is Jesus Christ, Jessey faces the problem of those biblical passages which speak about some future glorious reign of the Messiah upon earth. Although some Jews are almost persuaded, by the Scriptures and by their rabbis, Jessey writes, that the Messiah has already come but as yet keeps himself hidden for the Jews, and indeed even believe that the Christian Jesus is truly the Messiah, the son of David, yet there are a number of scriptural passages which seem to contradict this, namely those verses which speak about the excellent reign of the Messiah. These prophecies seem not to have been fulfilled by the Christian Messiah.

It is here that millenarianism comes to the fore. Jessey addresses himself not only to the Jews, but also to the Christian anti-millenarians. First, reference is made to the many prophecies which still await their fulfilment, such as those about the destruction of all idolatry; the increase of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters covering the sea; the calling of the Jews from all quarters of the world and their restoration to great privileges; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Jews; the destruction of all their oppressors, and the establishment of the Messiah's Fifth

E.G.E. van der Wall, "Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669): an Amsterdam Millenarian Friend of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel" (forthcoming); *idem*, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius*, p. 604.

⁶² *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XVI, sect. XLVII-XLIX, pp. 97-101. References are also made to Genesis Rabba, R. Abon, R. Jonathan, R. Nehumia ben Haccanas, and the Talmudic tracts Beracoth and Mematha Corin (TB).

⁶³ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XVII, sect. L-LII, pp. 101-106.

Monarchy. How do Christians reply to this objection the Jews may raise against Jesus being the true Messiah? If the Christians can provide the Jews with a convincing answer, then the latter might own defeat and become Christians, Jessey states. But if not, why should we force them to do so? Why should we persecute them, if we do not have more convincing evidence⁶⁴?

Jessey gives a survey of the possible Christian answers. Some Christians say that these promises are not to be understood in a literal sense but in a hidden, spiritual way; that all these things are already fulfilled in a spiritual way in all faithful Christians, who are the seed of Abraham, the Israel of the Lord, the true Jews, Jehudah, the glory of the whole earth. Others say that all this will be gradually fulfilled in some Jews, but that no visible glorious reign of the Messiah is to be expected, such as the millenarians and the Jews look forward to. Finally some Christians say that they acknowledge that there will be a glorious restoration of the Jews of the flesh. Yet they do not deny a literal meaning besides the spiritual one: these things are already being spiritually fulfilled in those who are true Christians. Jessey connects this notion of "true Christianity" with a sharp criticism of "name" Christians, who may be compared with uncircumcised Jews⁶⁵.

One of the most problematic issues might concern the Calling of the Jews. One could put forward that the New Testament does not seem to speak about a Calling of the Jews of the flesh, neither of a glorious reign of the Messiah upon earth, and that, furthermore, Christian authors reject this notion as an idle fantasy, made up by the Jews and the – Christian – millenarians. As regards the New Testament, Jessey points to the saying that Christ will be given the throne of his father David and that he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Luke 1:32, 33). As to the Calling of the Jews, Jessey naturally refers to Romans 11:12, 15 ("Now if the fall of them [i.e., the Jews of the flesh] be the riches of the world and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?") as well as to Romans 11:25, 26 ("For I would not brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved"). Moreover, as concerns the Calling of the Jews, after his resurrection the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

⁶⁴ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XVIII, sect. LIII-LIV, pp. 106-110.

⁶⁵ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XVIII, sect. LV-LVI, pp. 110-113.

(Acts 1:6). Jesus did not reject their question as a fantasy, a product of their wild imagination, but he merely replied “it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:7, 8)⁶⁶.

It is emphasized by Jessey that Israel’s desolation will not last for ever, referring to Christ’s words that Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the gentiles during a certain period, namely “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). The same can be read in Matthew 23:38, 39, where Christ says “Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”. This emphasis on the limited duration of Israel’s captivity is characteristic of all Christian philo-Semites⁶⁷.

In connection with the imminent visible kingdom of the Messiah, Jessey refers to a great many biblical passages on the suddenness of Christ’s coming and its effects. He sketches the millennial scenario in truly biblical colors. This coming of Christ will be with the clouds of heaven (Dan. 7:13), when the Lord shall destroy the wicked, the man of sin (the head of many nations), with the brightness of his coming. Then the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath will be given to Babylon (Rev. 16:19). He will put down all his enemies, all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. 15:24; Dan. 2:35, 44), and destroy all ungodly (1 Thess. 5:1, 3). The resurrection of the dead will take place (1 Cor. 15:23) and the judgment of the quick and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1). Then the patriarchs will truly enjoy the heavenly city, having been strangers in Canaan until then (Hebr. 11:10, 14). Those who will have overcome worldly temptations, will eat of the hidden manna and of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev. 2:17, 7). They will receive power from Christ over the nations – as Christ has received from his Father – in order to rule them with a rod of iron and break them to shivers as the vessels of a potter (Rev. 2:26, 27; 19:15). To each of them will be given the morning star and they will walk with Christ clothed with white robes (Rev. 3:5; 7:9, 14). Then Christ will confess their names before his heavenly Father, and before his holy angels (Rev. 3:5). He will make them a pillar in the temple of God and they shall go out no more; He will write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God (Rev. 3:12). And they will sit with Christ on His throne, just as He is sitting

⁶⁶ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIX, sect. LVII-LVIII, pp. 113-118.

⁶⁷ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XIX, sect. LVII, pp. 115-116.

with his Father on his Father's throne. Then the Father shall dwell among them, and they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more nor suffer any longer: for the Lamb shall feed them and shall lead them to living fountains of waters (Rev. 7:15-17). O happy and blessed people, in whom these things will be fulfilled!, Jessey exclaims⁶⁸.

He then goes on to trace in rough outline the apocalyptic drama. After spiritual Babylon will have been judged, a great multitude will say "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:1, 6). The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife, i.e., the Jewish people, has made herself ready, and to her is granted that she shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (Rev. 19:7, 8). Then the Messiah, seated upon a white horse, being clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, will destroy the wild beast as well as the kings of the earth who will try to prevent his marriage. And the beast and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant will be slain with the sword proceeding out of the Messiah's mouth, which will be a feastmeal for the souls (Rev. 19:11, 13, 19-21)⁶⁹.

Next the Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit and shut up that he shall deceive the nations no more, during a period of a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7), and all those that have suffered for the witness of Jesus will be alive again and reign with Christ during that period. After the battle against Gog and Magog, the Satan, the Devil and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire, into which the beast and the prophet had been cast a thousand years before. The last and general resurrection will take place a thousand years after the resurrection of the just. Even the sea will give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead to be judged, according to their works (Rev. 20:13). Jessey contends that "hades" and "she'ol" are not to be understood as denoting a geographical place, but stand for a general state of the dead. For this conception of hell he refers to Henry Ainsworth and Hugh Broughton⁷⁰.

Finally there will come a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:2, 3), and a new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven (Rev. 21:12), which in all respects will excell the new heaven and earth described in Isaiah 65. Jessey stresses the viewpoint that the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21 is not to be identified with the beloved city of the millennial reign (Rev. 20:9), as is maintained by several authors, such as Rob-

⁶⁸ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XX, sect. LIX-LX, pp. 118-123.

⁶⁹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXI, sect. LXI, p. 124-125.

⁷⁰ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXI, sect. LXII-L, sect. XIII, pp. 125-128. Jessey refers to Ainsworth's book on the article of faith "He has descended into hell", and to Broughton's letter to Bishop Bilson on this subject.

ert Maton, like Jessey a Baptist divine, whose book *Israels Redemption* (London, 1642) was rather popular at the time⁷¹.

As to the objection that Christian authors reject the idea of a millennial reign as an idle fantasy, Jessey advances the standard millenarian argument that the belief in the visible kingdom of the Messiah has been held by the most eminent teachers of the Early Church as well as by prominent authors of the last times, especially since the light has broken through the thickest darkness of popery. It is the well-known list of early Christian authorities that Jessey produces: Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho (for which he refers to the *Clavis Apocalyptica* by that "famous" Mr. Mede), Papyrius, Melito of Sardis, Policrates of Ephesus, Papias of Hierapolis, Nepos and others⁷². Among the authors of the last times the following are mentioned: Hildegard of Bingen (quoted in a sermon by R. Wimbleton, held in 1338 in London and reprinted in 1634 by Thomas Cotes), Peter Martyr, Thomas Brightman, John Cotton, Hieronymus Zanchius, David Pareus, André Rivet, Johann Heinrich Alsted, Petrus Cunaeus, Patrick Forbes, Johannes Ferus, Seraphin Firmianus, Martinus Cellarius, Johannes Dobricius, and Christianus Resoldus⁷³. Moreover, Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler are extensively quoted; both, like their fellow astrologer/astronomer Dobricius, enjoyed great popularity with seventeenth-century millenarians, because of their predicting a golden age of peace, in which the swords will be beaten into plowshares, and the spears into pruninghooks (Mich. 4:3), the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Is. 11:6, 9). In his *De Nova Stella in Serpentario* Kepler said that all the divisions among the Christians may tend to be an occasion for the conversion of the Indians and of the Jews, a saying which Jessey, of course, was only too happy to quote⁷⁴.

Having refuted the wrong views on the restoration of the Jews and the

⁷¹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXII, sect. LXIV-LXVI, pp. 128-132. For Robert Maton, see Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 31; Ball, *A Great Expectation*, pp. 67, 75, 94-95, 102 n. 94, 153, 155 n. 227, 167, 231 n. 15; Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 101-102, 172.

⁷² *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIII, sect. LXVIII, pp. 134-136.

⁷³ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIII, sect. LXIX, pp. 136-139. It was quite unusual to put the Leiden Professor of Theology André Rivet, the Roman Catholic exegete Johannes Ferus, and Firmianus (whose identity is unknown to me) on the list of Christian millenarian authors. Cellarius and Resoldus also did not belong to the popular group of millenarians. It is noteworthy that Jessey does not mention Joseph Mede nor his friend Nathaniel Homes.

⁷⁴ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIII, sect. LXX, p. 139-141. On Brahe's and Kepler's popularity in seventeenth-century millenarian circles, see E.G.E. van der Wall, "An Awakening Warning to the Wofull World (1662): Millenarianism and Astrology in Petrus Serrarius", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, lxiv (1984), 184-214.

visible kingdom of the Messiah, Jessey finally deals briefly with seven objections which "proud Israel" might raise against the Christian position. For example, the Jews might ask the Christians: how can it be that the New Testament is so highly esteemed, while it contains obvious contradictions? How can it be that Christ rejects all swearing, idolatry, drunkenness and avarice, yet that all these things are seen among the Christians? What do we have to think about the sabbath-breaking of the Christians? And how can the Christians say that Christ discarded the laws of Moses⁷⁵?

Jessey answers these questions in the following way. It is a well-known fact, he says, that there are many biblical passages which seem to contradict each other, but in reality do not do so, as has been shown by Menasseh in his famous *Conciliator*. It is not so that the Scriptures need any reconciliation, Jessey emphasizes, because everything in them flows from one truth. As to the discrepancies in the New Testament, Jessey hastens to point out that the Old Testament is full of much greater contradictions⁷⁶. With regard to the Jewish reproach concerning the un-Christian way of life of the Christians, he only remarks that the Jews first ought to see the beam in their own eyes, before wishing to remove it from the eyes of someone else⁷⁷.

As a Saturday-Sabbatarian, Jessey felt himself of course involved in questions concerning the sabbath. He states that Christ only performed appropriate works on the sabbath and certainly did not break it. With regard to the Christians who do not keep the sabbath, he replies that this is a fault which many Christians want to reform, and with which all would agree if only they were sufficiently convinced of the rightness of keeping the sabbath. Jessey, however, cannot refrain from criticizing the way in which most Jews are used to keeping the sabbath. You yourself do not sanctify the sabbath enough, the Jewish reader is told: do you call it sanctification when you visit the synagogue for two or three hours, while listening to your own words, or adorning your body? Is this the way God has intended the sabbath to be? Please first reform yourself, and then you may reform others⁷⁸.

Lastly, concerning the binding of the Mosaic law, Jessey notes that three kinds of law have been given by God to Moses⁷⁹. In the first place the moral law, which Christ has said to fulfill. Secondly, the judicial law, which is also valid for all ages, and which is even kept according to the

⁷⁵ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXIII, pp. 143-144.

⁷⁶ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXV, pp. 149-152.

⁷⁷ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXVI, p. 152.

⁷⁸ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXVI, pp. 152-154.

⁷⁹ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXVII, pp. 154-157.

letter in New England – this undoubtedly refers to John Cotton's scheme to introduce the Mosaic code in Massachusetts, which, in a slightly altered form, was adopted in 1648⁸⁰ – and it would be a good thing if it were kept in England also as well as in the whole world. We know that in the 1650s, the Fifth Monarchists demanded the restoration of the Mosaic code in England and one may safely assume that Jessey was among those who supported this demand wholeheartedly⁸¹. Thirdly, Israel had received the ceremonial laws, of which it is generally admitted that these are for instruction, but not that they are in force anymore. Now, the Jews may reply that these latter laws have been said to be eternally valid. Jessey, however, points out the meaning of "le'olam" is not eternal in the sense of everlasting, but that the term refers to a certain limited period. Jewish sources are quoted to support this view, for example the Midrash Samuel, where it is stated that "le'olam" means "a levitical age", i.e., a period of fifty years⁸².

"And now, dear nation of the Jews", as Jessey addresses himself to the Jews at the end of his *Glory and Salvation*, "I have shown to you your excellence above all other nations, the crown of your glory resting in the promised Messiah. Furthermore, I have demonstrated, on the basis of the Scriptures as well as of your own esteemed Hebrew authors, old and new alike, the excellence of your Messiah, etc. All the issues dealt with in my treatise I have given serious consideration", Jessey says, "and I protest before God that if I found more truth on your side than on that of the Christians, all advantages, all honor and all riches of the world would not prevent me from embracing your truth. However, though I hope to keep up the respect I have for you by mouth and pen, as long as I can speak and write, I must confess that I have seen more truth in the answers of the Christians than in yours. And so I am a Christian, believing everything written in the Books of Moses and in the prophets concerning the Messiah and the future glory". Thereby, Jessey reveals the outcome of his deliberation⁸³.

"Thus I request you, eminent nation of the Jews", he concludes his treatise, "to give serious consideration to the above-mentioned issues. Pray God to give you penitence from your own sins and those of your forefathers. Because if you have turned from your transgressions to the

⁸⁰ See Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 170.

⁸¹ See Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, ch. 7.

⁸² *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXVII, pp. 155-156. References are made to R. Maimon, R. Menechem, and R. Moses Ha-Darshan.

⁸³ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXIX, pp. 158-160.

Lord, then the Lord will return to you in great mercy and He will order the promised Messiah to be your Savior and Redeemer out of the hands of all your enemies (Is. 59:20). Then it shall come to pass that the Lord will turn your captivity (Deut. 30:1, 4) and will remember his covenant (Lev. 26:41, 42, 44). Say to the Lord, "Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Isaac acknowledge us not because of our unbelief" (Is. 60:13) and ask Him to make you understand wherein you have erred (Job 6:24), why this captivity under the Romans lasts so much longer and is so much more arduous than any other captivity. Pray to the Lord: please show us what we do not see. Why are we still so stubborn? Think of your covenant, to take away our stony hearts and give us hearts of flesh (Ez. 36:26), pour upon us the spirit of grace and of supplications, as you have promised to do one day, so that we may look upon the one whom we have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and we shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn (Zech. 12:10). O how is all the house of Israel uncircumcised in the heart up till today! When you will repent daily with these words", Jessey remarks, "the Lord will say to you: I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned for thou art the Lord my God etc. (Ier. 31:18-20). When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in glory (Ps. 102:16), He will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Is. 62:6), and He will lay your stones with fair colors, and lay your foundations with sapphires, and all your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children (Is. 54:11, 13)"⁸⁴.

"Till the Lord will hear your prayers", Jessey ends his "patheticall and convincing exhortation to repentance and brokenness of heart"⁸⁵, "please know that there are many Christians in London and the whole of England who remember you with the Lord and who are resolved not to give Him rest", among whom is Jessey himself: he is one of His servants, who "takes pleasure in your stones, and favors the dust thereof" (Ps. 102:14)⁸⁶.

In comparison with other seventeenth-century philo-Semitic millenarian writings, *The Glory and Salvation of Jehudah and Israel* is not so much conspicuous for its millenarianism – which is quite conventional – as for its philo-Semitism. As to the tone of the treatise and the message it has

⁸⁴ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXX, pp. 160-167.

⁸⁵ This characterization of Jessey's conclusion is to be found in [Whiston], *Life*, p. 80.

⁸⁶ *De heerlickheydt en heyl*, ch. XXIV, sect. LXXX, p. 167.

for the Jews and their future restoration, Jessey's philo-Semitism resembles that of other philo-Semites, such as Serrarius and Dury. However, it is his great reliance on Jewish sources in which he differs from them. Neither Jean Bethison in his *Excitabulum Matutinum Judaeorum*⁸⁷, nor Felgenhauer in his *Bonum Nuncium Israeli*, nor Serrarius, Dury, or Isaac La Peyrère for that matter, refer so frequently to Jewish authorities. Naturally Jessey's method was determined by his conversionist aim, but the method says something about the man: a learned Hebraist with great respect for the Jewish tradition. Moreover, we find in Jessey a remarkable – but rare – combination of two aspects of Christian philo-Semitic millenarianism: he was both an extremely active philo-Semite and an impressive theorist.

With regard to his method, Jessey followed in the footsteps of Hugh Broughton, who, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, also tried to win the Jews by turning their learning back upon them⁸⁸. In the late seventeenth century, as Popkin has shown, a radically different conversionist discussion was to take place, when it was tried to make the Jews see the ridiculousness of Talmudic, ceremonial Judaism⁸⁹. Jessey, however, wanted to contribute to the reconciliation of Jews and Christians by an attempt to adapt the Jewish tradition to the Christian, thus creating a kind of "Judeo-Christianity", the history of which has been one of the main interests of the man who has been a source of inspiration and such a stimulating force to the many "Popkinites", including the author of the present article.

⁸⁷ On Jean Bethison and his *Excitabulum Matutinum Judaeorum* (a treatise mentioned by Henry Oldenburg in his correspondence with Menasseh ben Israel), see E.G.E. van der Wall, "The Return of the Jews to Palestine Proclaimed by Jean Bethison in his *Excitabulum Matutinum Judaeorum* (1663)" (forthcoming). For Isaac La Peyrère, see R.H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676): His Life, Work and Influence* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 1) (Leiden, 1987).

⁸⁸ See Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979), p. 159.

⁸⁹ R.H. Popkin, "A Late Seventeenth-Century Attempt to Convert the Jews to Reformed Judaism" (forthcoming).

AU DOSSIER DU SABBATAISME: UNE RELATION ITALIENNE DU XVII^{ème} SIÈCLE

HENRY MÉCHOULAN

En présentant cette relation italienne de l'aventure de Sabbatai Tsevi, relation qui, après recherche, nous apparaît inédite, nous avons bien conscience que nous manquons d'éléments importants. En effet ce document¹ n'est ni daté, ni signé, et nous ignorons les raisons qui ont déterminé sa rédaction. On peut imaginer que son auteur, par ce récit, remercie son protecteur, Jérôme Grimaldi, Archevêque d'Aix. Ce prélat, à qui l'on doit de nombreux ouvrages de théologie, s'installe dans la ville en 1650 et ne la quittera qu'avec sa mort en 1685. C'est un esprit ouvert et pieux, nous apprend le dictionnaire de Moreri², qui reçut la reine Christine avec faste et intelligence en 1656³. Ce même dictionnaire nous apprend également que Jérôme Grimaldi faisait faire des missions fréquentes et soutenait les bons prêtres de son autorité. Est-ce l'un d'eux qui exprime sa reconnaissance par le texte que nous présentons? C'est d'autant plus probable que l'archevêque d'Aix, comme un grand nombre de chrétiens et de juifs, désirait avoir des lumières sur un mouvement, une agitation qu'il ne pouvait ignorer puisque celle-ci concernait directement les juifs d'Avignon, ville très proche d'Aix-en-Provence. A ce propos Scholem écrit: "Il y eut une agitation considérable en Avignon, qui faisait encore partie des Etats pontificaux, et où les juifs avaient droit de résidence. Les sources chrétiennes rapportent qu'en

¹ Ce manuscrit est tiré d'un dossier dont le titre est "Morale et jésuites (1626-1705)", qui contient des pièces diverses se rapportant aux jésuites et au jansénisme, des lettres autographes de quelques ecclésiastiques et de Louis Thomasin de Mazaugues qui appartiennent à une famille de parlementaires d'Aix. Le document que nous présentons porte la cote 159 (L 164) à la bibliothèque Inguimbertaine de Carpentras. Tous les manuscrits que contient ce recueil sont écrits sur du papier du XVII^e siècle. Il comporte 581 feuillets de format 320 x 210; il est relié en veau. Le document qui nous occupe va des folios 213 à 221. Nous tenons à remercier très vivement Madame Isabelle Battez, Conservateur de la Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, pour l'aide précieuse qu'elle a bien voulu nous apporter dans notre recherche.

² Paris, 1759, s.v.

³ Jérôme Grimaldi dépêcha auprès de ce monarque savant, Herbelot, interprète des langues orientales et Arckenholtz, le biographe de la reine. "Christine ne fut pas moins ravie, à ce que dit Perrault, du choix qu'avait fait le cardinal Grimaldi, archevêque d'Aix du Sr. D'Herbelot, si universellement savant et par conséquent, si capable de l'entretenir selon son goût et son génie". In Arckenholtz, *Mémoires concernant Christine de Suède* (Amsterdam, 1751), i. 330.

mars 1666, les juifs firent des préparatifs pour se rendre en Palestine’’⁴. Scholem nous apprend également qu’une brochure écrite par un ecclésiastique catholique (Jacob Becherend?) se trouvant à Constantinople en 1666, fut publiée en Avignon au printemps 1667 sous le titre *Relation de la véritable imposture du faux Messie des Juifs, nomme Sabbatay Sevi*⁵.

Le récit développé dans ce manuscrit présente une version de l’aventure sabbatéenne qu’il appartient aux spécialistes d’examiner. Il est à la fois fidèle aux synthèses que nous connaissons, et parfois totalement étranger à ce que nous savons de certains événements de la vie du “Messie”. L’auteur de ce manuscrit affirme que les faits qu’il avance sont “connus de science certaine” et déclare ne se fonder que sur des sources orales, mais à l’évidence il s’agit plus d’une formule que de la réalité. Parmi les éléments intéressants, et pour le moins étranges, le rôle, à Galata, d’une “figliola hebreia da 16 a 17 anni, vergine”, mais, surtout, la reconnaissance par Sabbatai Tsevi, au moment de son abjuration, de la personne de Jésus-Christ comme seul et véritable Messie. Scholem rapporte que, selon Coenen, Sabbatai Tsevi, en 1655, s’était exclamé devant des rabbins: “Qu’avait fait Jésus que vous l’avez ainsi maltraité Je veillerai à ce qu’il soit compté parmi les prophètes”. Sur ce point, le récit du pasteur protestant est peut-être matière à caution. Nous savons néanmoins que la personne de Jésus était présente à l’esprit de Sabbatai: il imitait certains de ses actes Il était fasciné par la question du rapport entre l’âme de Jésus et celle du vrai Messie, à savoir lui-même’’⁶. En admettant qu’il y ait eu fascination, pouvons-nous réellement imaginer que celui que l’auteur du manuscrit présente comme le deuxième personnage de l’empire ottoman exige au moment de l’abjuration que Sabbatai reconnaisse et confesse que Jésus-Christ, fils de la Vierge Marie, est le véritable Messie et qu’il est prêt à le proclamer dans le monde entier pour confondre l’ignorance et la méchanceté des juifs? Si ce fait s’avérait authentique, on pourrait y voir une volonté de mépris et de dérision de la part du musulman à l’égard du juif.

Il est à noter que ces deux éléments particulièrement intéressants, à savoir le rôle de la jeune fille et la reconnaissance de Jésus comme seul véritable Messie, figurent également dans l’ouvrage de Chaudon, *Les imposteurs démasqués et les usurpateurs punis*⁷, ouvrage que l’on pourrait ajouter à la bibliographie de Scholem. Chaudon reprend, en ce qui concerne ces deux points, les affirmations de notre manuscrit à partir d’une relation

⁴ G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Tsevi, le messie mystique 1626-1676* (Paris, 1983), p. 532.

⁵ *Ibid.*, note p. 118.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

⁷ Paris, 1776.

qu'il cite en italique, sans donner ses sources, et qui est très proche de celle de notre manuscrit. Parlant de la jeune fille, il cite: "Elle avait vu un ange environné d'une admirable clarté, ayant en main une épée flamboyante, qui lui avait dit que le véritable Messie était venu, et qu'il se manifesterait sur le rivage du Jourdain; qu'il fallait se disposer à le recevoir et à aller lui rendre hommage"⁸. Pour ce qui est de l'abjuration et de la reconnaissance du Christ, Chaudon écrit que le "moulla ou prédicateur du grand-seigneur, nommé Vanli Afendi, prit la parole et lui dit qu'avant de professer le mahométisme, il fallait qu'il crût en Jésus-Christ, Vierge, & qu'il le reconnût comme un grand prophète et le véritable Messie envoyé de Dieu"⁹. Il n'est pas dans notre propos de discuter ces deux relations anonymes qui, à un siècle d'écart, reprennent pratiquement les mêmes termes, mais il nous a semblé utile de les rapprocher.

En dépit de l'impossibilité d'assurer la critique interne d'un texte qui se rapporte à un domaine étranger à notre camp d'investigation, nous sommes heureux de procurer ce document⁹ en hommage à notre ami Richard H. Popkin.

**All'emi[nentissi]mo signore Pad[ro]ne mio Oss[ervandissi]mo
L'emin[entissi]mo Signor il Cardinale
Grimaldi di Archivescovo d'Aix.**

*Ragguaglio del Messia delli ebrei riconosciuto da tutto l'ebraismo
questi anni pa[ss]a[tti] nel Levante, il quale ha coronata la
sua missione col turbante, a confusione di questi miserabili
accecati dalla loro perfida ostinatione.*

Emin[entissi]mo Sig[no]re

Perché con l'occa[si]one di fargli riverenza hebbi mottivo di dargli qualche ragguaglio non solo del mio viaggio, ma occasioni del mio ritorno per queste parti, mi fu accennato dovessi far qualche più chiaro discorso intorno del rivevuto Messia dalli ebrei nelle parti di Levante, ma anchora descrizione del monte Libano dove mi ritrovo di stabilimento. Per quanto l'urgenza de miei occorrenti me l'ha permesso non ho volsuto mancare in questo obbligo avanti la mia partenza, qual humilmente presento non in lingua mia volgare, ma imparata nei luoghi dei suoi natali, a me più favorevolmente et, che spero, li riuscirà più grata. Ho inteso essersi stampato qualche cosa di questo ricevuto Messia delli ebrei: non me ne sono servito in questo discorso, perche non l'ho veduta, ma parlerò

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

⁹ Les règles de l'édition sont les suivantes: ponctuation du texte et emploi des majuscules selon l'usage moderne, respect de l'orthographe du manuscrit; développement des abréviations, accentuation des voyelles selon l'usage moderne.

semplicemente di quello ho di certa scienza et da persone degne di fede ho imparato in quelle parti locali che' como segue.

Infinite et inutili sarebbero le pene di chi volesse accostare insieme tutte le cose di questo riconosciuto et ricevuto Messia delli ebrei per ritrovarsene parte alterate, altre false; solo adonq[ue] ridurò le cose al saldo vero et reale, che meritano fede, circa il principio, progresso, et fine di questo Messia et suo falso propheta.

Della nascita, luogo et nome di questo ricevuto Messia

In Smirna nacque questo Messia, detto Sabathai, l'anno 1625. Figliolo primogenito di Mardocheo Sevi, di fortuna mediocre, questo è riuscito di una vivacità di ingegno e spirito non ordinaria, la quale, aiutata dallo studio, l'ha portato al segno di dottrina legale theologica anco la più recondita che chiamano Caballa, che l'ha fatto ammirare da gli ebrei e stimare come il più adottrinato et savio di quanti vivono tra essi nel mondo. Quanto alla sua presenza non si può dir altro salvo che, accompagnata da un trattar compito, manierofo et intrante, lo rende amabile a maraviglia.

Questo, per brevirla, doppo un breve giro per la Grecia, si transferì per la prima volta in Constantinopoli del 1648 et vi si trattenne poco meno di un anno senz'altro impiego che di monstrar la sua dottrina et zelo della Legge; con che si conciliò fama non solo di segnalatissimo doctore, ma di santo e profeta, et così veniva acclamato, sino da fanciulli per le strade et dalli poveri allettati dalle sue liberalità.

Queste troppe grandi acclamationi di santo fece temere li ebrei che sanno che li Turchi non vogliono altri santi che della loro religione, onde giudicarono spediente di sbrigarli da quelle parti da questo Sabathai, con obligarlo a ritornarsene in Smirna. Dove gionto li medesimi di Smirna furono del medesimo sentimento di quelli di Constantinopoli. Siché questo Sabathai, per lasciar li suoi in riposo et sigurtà se n'andò al Gran Cairo et doppo due anni, con una bona limosina che ivi raccolse per i poveri della Palestina, passò in Hierusalemme, e in quelle parti si è trattenuto fin tanto che, dichiarato Messia, ritornò alla Patria et da quivi a Constantinopoli per coronarla sua missione col turbante.

Delle Preconizatione di questo Messia

Questa preconizatione del Messia cominciò in Galata (che é parte di Costantinopoli la più habitata da Christiani et ebrei) da una figliola ebrea da 16 a 17.^e anni, vergine come dicono, di grande e molto sublime contemplatione, la quale dichiarò a i suoi parenti come Dio li mostrava cose di gran stupore et tra le altre cose che gli era comparso un angelo vestito di luce con una spada scintillante che l'avertiva del tanto aspettato Messia et che bisognava apparecchiarsi a riceverlo et andar ad incontrarlo su la riva del Giordano, là dove ben presto si doveva far vedere per dar principio felice et glorioso alla grande impresa della redentione delli ebrei. Il Padre della giovane comunicò ad alcuni dottori della legge queste revelationi, et col parere di questi, si concluse che in modo alcuno non si doveva negare la fede a questa voce del Cielo et che al più tosto si dovessero transferire in Hierusalem per ivi attendere l'adempimento dell'angelica promessa. Corse subito questa nova per il paese ma molti delli ebrei non vi davano credito fin tanto che videro molti a vender li loro haveri et andare nella Palestina.

Delle visioni

Due notabili visioni tra molte altre false si dicevano, che spacciavano per verissime. La prima che un angelo, un sabato, haveva dato con spada un fiero colpo al sole mentre splendeva più luminoso nel suo meriggio et che questo colpo lo rese negro como carbone; di novo lo toccò et gli transfuse novi e più vaghi splendori. La seconda visione era di tre stelle quali affermarono essersi vedute combattere sopra del sarraglio del Gran Turco et che dopplo l'esserne state due precipitate nel mare, la terza, vittoriosa con lume raddoppiato, si portò trionfante nel cielo. Queste visioni, agionate con la visione della giovane e partenze che si facevano per la Palestina, animò tutti gli ebrei a sperar bone perché, nel sole rallumato, riconoscevano lo novo splendore della loro monarchia, et nella stella ventictrice, la loro religione trionfante della christiana e turchesca, il che in somma moveva tutti a correr con diligenza verso le fortunate ripe del Giordano per vedervi il Messia tanto da loro bramato et aspettato. Et così erano diventati tutti gentilhomini cavallieri; di negocii più se ne parlava ma solo di allegrie feste et balli con scherni della christiana et ottomana religioni.

Del Profeta riconosciuto dalli ebrei, precursore del loro Messia

In Gaza, città famosa della Palestina, viveva in stima di santo e profeta (presso li ebrei) un certo rabino detto per nome Natambeniamin, di natione allemanno, che professava una vita austerissima, totalmente applicato alla contemplazione et interpreta[zi]one delle divine Lettere, che riprendeva con somma libertà et autorità li vitii delli ebrei, manifestando a molti li luoro più occulti peccati, il che tutto lo faceva stimare come un aneglo di Dio a dispetto della sua presenza, che pareva anzi di un demonio, così è squallido, scarno, losco, diforme et contraffatto nel viso e in tutta la persona. A questo li ebrei particolarmente ebbero ricorso per terminare tutti li loro dubbii in risguardo del luoro Messia; a quali rispose non solo esser vera la visione della vergine di Galata, ma che di più li faceva sapere ch'egli stesso haveva havuto ordine expreso del cielo di esser suo precursore et di farlo conoscer al mondo, et che non mancherebbe quanto prima di monstrarglielo: "Voi vedrete, disse, fra pochi giorni venirsene qua un certo rabbi Sabadei Sevi, huomo d'incomparabile santità il q[ua]le io non ho mai conosciuto di vista ma so ch'egli è inviato da Dio per esser liberatore del suo popolo". Infatti tra pochi giorni arrivò in Gaza Sabathai Sevi, e fu riconosciuto et accolto da Natambeniamin sud[det]to con ossequi proportionali al titolo di Messia in presenza di molti ebrei. Alla prima questo Sabathai non accettava questi titoli, chiamandosene indegno; ma finalmente obbligandolo questo profeta Natambeniamin, si credette di sì, sichè doppo qualche breve dimora in Gaza si diede a visitar la Giudea et consolar i fratelli.

Della nova datasi alli ebrei in tutte le parti
del mondo del venuto Messia

Mentre questo Messia nella Giudea dava principio alla sua missione, Natambeniamin, profeta, spedì lettere per ogni parte del mondo alli ebrei dispersi, assicurandoli la nova del venuto Messia promesso da Dio, con esortarli di prontamente radunarsi per fargli degna corte et per servirlo nell'executione dell'ufficio per il quale Dio l'haveva mandato. Queste lettere del profeta, accompagnate con al-

tre autentiche delle diverse sinagoghe di Levante, fecero tal effetto che da diverse parti del mondo non solo venivano deputati imbasciatori per parte delle sinagoghe, ma principali et ricchissimi particolari vendevano il luoro haveri, et vennero sino nel Giordano per riverire et riconoscere questo Messia, a piedi del q[ua]lle offerivano presenti grandi, oltre l'assistenza che per debito gli promettevano con dimonstratione particolare d'ogni più devotissima servitù.

Le nove, li avisi particolari che si facevano caminare dei miracoli favolosi di questo Messia: è un chaos. Caminava su le acque, resuscitava morti. Insomma questo manteneva la cecità di questi poveri miserabili: tra q[ua]li se vi si ritrovava alcuno che non credesse a questo Messia, oltre dalla moltitud[ine] era convinto, e passava tra essi per scomunicato et indegno della grazia della venuta loro redentione.

L'attesta[ti]oni di Natambeniamin dissipava tutti li dubbii di più prud[en]ti spiriti che havevano q[ues]to Messia per un gran furbo. Interpretava il nome di Sabathai Sevi, che vuol dire Angelo Protettore del Sabato. In somma le grandi prerogative di questo Messia: la sua santità manifestissima nelli continui digiuni di tutta una settimana, dal sabato in poi, la carità verso i poveri, l'assidua oratione, la sua sapientia et scienza impareggiabile et sopra tutto la sua maravigliosa continenza, per prova della quale Natambeniamin produceva atestatione delle due prime moglie di questo Messia che bisognava credere non haver mai toccate; quanto all terza nata in Allemagna, d[a]ma Sara, si diceva haver questa corso il mondo per trovar uno tra tanti mariti che doveva esser il Messia; e questa haveva pigliata per qualche gran misterio a guisa di qualcheduno delli antichi profeti per obedire alle divine ordinationi. Tutto questo congiunto con altre continuate nove di miracoli sbattevano tutti li dubbii. V'era poi nova sighura di un armata di molti migliaia d'huomini, oltre quello che da Dio li era mandato in soccorso, che non si sapeva di che legge fossero, salvo che osservavano il sabato et riconoscevano un solo Dio. Questa nova fece perplessi molti ebrei, i quali sino a relig[i]osi domandavano di volergli monstrar nella carta in che parte vi si ritrovasse un popolo delle conditioni di sopra.

Patenti per parti di Dio spedite da Natam beniamin a questo Messia

Speditisi li avisi per tutte le parti del Mondo, scombratisi li spiriti di più increduli ebrei, Natambeniamin passa più avanti nella sua commissione, et oltre il far ferma fede et attesta[ti]one al popolo, spedisse di più lettere et pattenti a questo Messia per parte di Dio; nelle quali non solo viene dichiarato il vero Messia, ma li ordini expressi da parte di Dio, acciò dia principio et proseguisca a fine l'excelso officio della sua missione.

Come il messia esercitò la podestà di monarca tra li ebrei:

Le passati con questi divini oracoli del sud[det]to profeta non solo havendo far deporre a miscredenti ogni minima dubita[ti]one, ma al Mesia la modesta sua simulatione con la quale fin alhora si era coperto*. Incominciò adonq[ue], come vero monarca, ad exercitare tra li ebrei la sua podestà come il più assoluto et adorato che mai comparisce al mondo, inviando per ogni parte li seg[uen]ti ordini alli suoi fedeli israeliti.

* La transcription de cette phrase est fidèle au manuscrit mais son sens reste obscur.

Primo ordinò che, in cambio di digiuno che con amarissimi pianti facevano per la funestissima ruina del tempio e città Santa di Hierusalemme, dovessero far festini, giochi, con cantici di trionfo et d'allegressa publica, essendo finalm[en]te venuto quello che doveva rimetter il tempio nel suo antico splendore et di più meter il popolo ebreo sopra la testa di tutte le nationi della terra.

Secondo a quelli di levante ordinò che, per segno della prossima libertà, si lasciassero crescere i capelli pendenti, inculcando che, con magior fervore, s'attendesse alla divotione et culto di Dio, cantando spalmi et ringraziando S[ua] D[ivina] M[ajesta] che li havesse per una volta esauditi et messo fine alle loro tanto passate lacrime. Era cosa di stupore in Constantinopoli l'intender per tutto Galata spalmeggiare li ebrei giorni et notte intiere, oltre le spese de festini et banchetti, ma più che più, di vedere l'insolenza di questi ebrei con la quale già trattavano parendo luoro haver già sotto i piedi non solo li Christini ma li stessi Turchi; che più negocii, che più traffichi erano come di sopra già tutti gentilhomini, prencipi et monarchi grandi.

Partenza del Messia per Constantinopoli a giusa d'altro Mosè

Finalmente, a guisa d'altro Mosé, si parte di Palestina questo Messia per venire in Constantinopoli a liberare il suo popolo dalle mani et tirannidi del Gran Turco. Et finalmente alli, il 6 di feb[raio] 1666, doppo l'esser stato diversi giorni per viaggio per causa di cattivi tempi, gionse vicino a Constantinopoli. Non bisogna tralasciare il discorso della magnificenza del suo seguito, qual puol immaginarsi, oltre il gran numero delli ebrei che si spicarono di confini di Constantinopoli i quali con carri, et altro li andarono incontro, celebrando con questo solemne arrivo quel solemniissimo sabato, tra tutti li passati gaudioso et glorioso, speranza poi straordinaria tra gli ebrei. Si havevano da vedere cose di grandissimo stupore, miracoli, cose da non dirsi. Per prima tra li ebrei si spacciava una cosa segreta ma certissima, che il Messia, per authorizzare la sua missione, al bello primo arrivo in Constantinopoli, farebbe cader fuoco del Cielo per incenerire quella città, che con terremoti farebbe cader a terra le mura et il gran Saraglio, del che il Gran Turco, impaurito et spaventato da questi prodigii, verrebbe a gettarsi a piedi di questo Messia con deporgli avanti la sua Corona et rinonciar nelle sue mani tutto l'ottomano impero. Hor pensino come vanno festosi con queste chimere questi poveri acciecati; ma lasciandoli per un poco, ritornandosene indietro, andiamo a vedere come si prepara il Turco per ricevere questo Messia.

Prepara[zi]oni del Gran Turco per l'arrivo di questo Messia, come ricevuto da lui

Se n'andavano con feste, iubili et preparativi grandi ad incontrare il sud[det]to Messia li sig[no]ri ebrei. Il Gran Sig[no]re et suo Gran Visiere, havendo certezza non solo di tutti li passati ma di più del prossimo arrivo di questo Messia, anchora egli si mette a l'ordine per mandar ad incontrar et ricevere questo Gran redentore delli ebrei, ma molto differentemente di quello essi si pensavano. Si mandò al Canale una squadra conveniente di Chiausi i quali, aspettando quivi l'arrivo di questo Messia, subito li gionse nelle mani, conforme all'ordine ricevuto, con non ordinaria garbatezza et cortesia turchescha si messero a salutare questo Messia molto particolarmente, et con non ordinaria diligenza mede[si]-

mamente il suo seguito: cioè con tali et tante bastonate a dextris et a sinistris, che ben presto si vidde tutto il gran seguito di questo Messia fargli riverenza di talloni, et affrettando li passi per scappare la borrasca delle bastonate che li diluviavano adosso, con grandi urli et cridi scappavano per le loro case. Et mentre questi fuggono, li Chiausi, non lasciando toccar di piede terra a questo Messia, con ordinarii compimenti di pugni, bastonate et continue vilanie, non lasciarono sino l'ebbero condotto nel palazzo preparatoli di una fetente prigione.

Della grande confusione delli ebrei

La passata borrasca del seguito del Messia cagionò non poco timore nelli ebrei; ma il sentire poi le sollemnissime risate con le quali erano burlati in Constantinopoli li cagionava confusione tale che, per tre giorni, stettero serrati nelle luoro case. Questi tre giorni, di commune consenso, furono consacrati a digiuni continui et orationi per la liberatione del luoro Messia, il quale doppio quel termine di tre giorni, con la sua onnipotenza, doveva far perire tutta quella città: cose grandi si havevano da vedere. Finiti questi tre giorni, non vedendo altro, pensaron ad uscire delle loro case, ma vedendosi più che più burlati da tutte le nationi, furono di novo costretti à più non comparire per le publiche strade, non mancando d'avisare però il mondo a non burlarsi di sì s[an]to Messia dal quale infallibilmente sarebbero castigati. Le burle essendo arrivate a segno tale che non potevano più comparire, li fece trovar per spediente il far gran somma di denari al Gran Visier per far ordini, acciò alcuno non hardisse più in Constantinopoli burlarsi di luoro.

Il Gran Turco si fa condur avanti questo Messia

Passavano come di sopra li tre giorni che li ebrei non videro niente di particolare del suo Messia; dubiosi et penserosi sopra di questo, finalmente appagandosi di questa ragione, dicevano ch'il luoro Messia era prudente et la diferriva ad altro tempo. Mentre questi discorsi si passavano tra li ebrei, il Gran Visier fece condursi il Sabathai Sevi, et interrogandolo intorno alli passati et suo impiego, ridusse questo povero Messia alle strette, il quale, bramoso di conservarsi la vita, li fece pensare da cenno in questo: onde rispose che egli era un povero ebreo che sopra li altri non haveva altro vantaggio che di qualche maggior cognitione che Dio li haveva dato della legge, con la quale cognitione haveva zelato che li ebrei osservassero la loro lege più perfettam[en]te, quanto al restante di Messia, era tanto lontano da persuadersi d'esserlo che forse più d'ogn'altro si stupiva della pazzia delli ebrei che, a suo dispetto, li volevano far credere d'esserlo et che a posta perciò egli era venuto a Constantinopoli, temendo di esser imbarassato nella Palestina dalla temerità di gente ignorante et dalla malignità et invidia dei suoi emoli, et che se non bastava quello haveva detto in particolare che alhora in publico renonciava ad ogni titolo, di Re, Messia, di Liberator delli ebrei per poter condur in pace et riposo il restante de suoi giorni. Questa risposta sodisfece intieramente al Divano (cioè Consiglio) ma il Gran Visier, sapendo distintam[en]te tutti li passati di questo furbo et le strade che s'andava, aprendo a tumulti et sollevationi con tanto concorso delli ebrei d'ogni paese, era di resolutione di farlo incontimente morire; ma uno dei consellieri disse non esser a proposito per alhora per il falso romore che li ebrei haverebbero fatto levare, come se si fosse fatto morire qualche luoro gran personaggio, ma ch'era meglio

lasciarlo anchora in vita: acciò, col tempo, il mondo s'andasse desingannando delle qualità personaggio. Onde fu ordinato di mandarlo alle castella di Dardanelli forti e lontani, con speranza che, quando farebbe sped[ien]te, l'haverebbero sempre sighuro per fargli la testa, et che in tanto si poteva ganare dalli ebrei qualche bona somma di danari.

È mandato questo Messia alli castelli

Fu mandato questo Messia alli Dardanelli castelli forti. Li ebrei, stimando questa cosa a gran miracolo che havesse scappata la borrasca, più de prima risvegliarono le loro speranze, magiormente vedendosi aperta la strada di poterlo vedere et parlare liberamente, sebene li costava qualche danari. Subito si composero molte favole e miracoli grandi: 1. che questo Messia usiva miracolosam[en]te della prigione tutte le notti, caminava su le acque; in somma si portava sino nelle rive del Giordano la notte a pigliarvi il fresco, et la mattina, si ritornava nella sua prigione dove vi stava perché voleva.

Questi favolosi discorsi rinovarono li spiriti delli ebrei ad haver sempre più nove speranze di prodigi grandi. Onde non si vedeva più altro sopra del canale di Constantinopoli che continue processioni di caichi carighi delli ebrei ch'andavano et ritornavano da questi castelli. Ben di più, tutti li ebrei della Polonia si erano retirati in quei contorni fingendo l'esser stati cacciati la quelle parti di Polonia.

Il Messia viene richiamato dalle castella

Il Gran Visier, avisato in Andrinopoli di questi processioni sul canale et andate a castelli delli ebrei (dove il guadagno del governatore non era poco) volse mettermi ordine: che fu una volta di far bon bastonare et metter prigionieri molti ebrei ch'erano andati colà sopra caichi siché liberati questi per forza di denari, impararono li altri et si mortificò queste processioni.

Alla fine d'Agosto il Gran Sig[no]re, avisato dal suo Mufti et da altri ministri dello scandalo che apportava al mahumatesimo questa riputatione et fama crescente di questo huomo delli ebrei, fece che deliberò sopra di q[ues]to fatto, ordinando al governatore delle Dardanelli di rimetter il prigioniero, il quale alli 17 di s[ettem]bre 1666 gionse in Andrinopoli. Questo giorno 17.º di s[ettem]bre deve esser giorno memorabile alli ebrei perché con la sua luce scoprì l'horribil inganno nel quale stavano et pose fine alle loro gloriosissime speranze.

Compare il Messia avanti del Gran Sig[no]re dove miseramente si fa turco.

Fu condotto il sud[det]to giorno avanti il Gran Sig[no]re Il Mesia, et interrog[a]to chi fosse et perchè si spacciasse per Messia delli ebrei. Questo, molto atonito, rispose nell'istesso modo che haveva fatto in Constantinopoli al Gran Visir: che sapeva bene d'esser un povero huomo, ne puoteva spirare più alto di quel Dio l'haveva fatto, che tutte quelle cose non erano ch'inventioni de suoi nemici che per quella via havevano dissegnato di perderlo.

Non basta questo, risposero d'ord[in]e del re i ministri, ma per desingannare tanta gente et tutto il mondo bisogna che, in questo momento stesso, per le mani d'uno di costoro che ti stanno a fianchi, tu perdi la testa o che tu renonci alla

tua legge per farti turco. Pregò per un poco di tempo affine di deliberare sopra un ponto sì importante, ma essendogli negato ogni prolongo, egli, doppio breve riflesso, havendo la morte avanti li occhi, considerando per altro le ricchezze che haveva et aquel più doveva sperare, disse liberamente: “Son turco et voglio morire turco”.

Confessione fatta di questo Sabbatai del Vero Messia
G[iesù] Christo nato di Maria Verg[in]e

Il Gran Vanli (ch'è il pred[ecesso]re del Gran Turco) rispose: “Questo va bene, ma in oltre, fa di bisogno che distintamenti confessi che Giesù Christo, figliolo di Maria Vergine è profeta di Dio et vero Messia”. Al che rispose il Sabathai: “Tutto questo è vero; io lo confesso qui ad alta voce et son pronto a publicar per tutto il mondo questa verità et che Giusù Christo, nato di Maria Vergine, è il vero Messia promesso alli ebrei, et ch'essi sono ignoranti, perfidi et ostinati nel errore et malitia luoro se sperano che n'abbia a venir un altro”.

La semplicità, gentilezza con la quale egli spiegò questi suoi concetti, diede molto nel humore del re et à tutti i principali della corte che assistevano spettatori di sì bella scena, dove quel operator di miracoli, quel gran savio, quel salvatore delli ebrei si faceva vedere infame rinnegato.

Gli fruttò subito la bona gratia del re, il quale subito gli comunicò il suo nome et gli pose nome Agis Mehemet, che vol dire caro Mehemet, gli diede poi reali presenti et in conseguenza di tutti li altri ministri li fu poi dato l'ufficio del serraglio, et fatto uno dei cappi bassi, che sono li principali uscieri, con trattenimento d'un scudo et mezzo al giorno.

Fatta questa publica professione, lo spogliarono per vestirlo alla turchesca, dicendo al Gran Soldano che temeva che gli ebrei non lo facessero morire. Ma egli l'assicurò con dirgli non avesse di questo paura, ma che avertisse solam[en]te di non trattare mai più con essi perché senz'altro havebe lasciata la testa. Al che rispose: “et che ho da far più con questa razza di gente; ho havuto da essi quanto pretendevo; non ho da cercar altro da quei matti, infami, traditori di Dio et di tutti li huomini da bene; sono già venti anni che ho conosciuto la luoro falsa fede la malitia et ostinatione luoro nel peccato”. Questa franchessa nel confessare la malignità delli ebrei (odiati in extremo da Turchi ben più che non sono li christiani) gli ha guadagnato talmente la gratia di Turchi che conversano con lui particolarmente. Il Vanli, poi Gran Pred[ecesso]re del Turco, si trattiene con esso con una strettissima familiarità, godendo sommamente nell' sentirgli discorrere delle stravaganze del talmud, degli errori spropositati della sinagoga d'hoggidi, della stupidità della gente minuta, della malitia et furberia di rabini, et in somma delli evenimenti che li sono occorsi nel progresso di una historia sì ridicola della sua missione.

Delli veli delli ebrei

In contraccambio bisogna vedere la confusione, lo stupore, sentire le lacrime, li urli et stordimento di questi miserabili ebrei nel quale si ritrovano non solo per la perdita di luoro boni, ma del loro honore et fama per haver dato credito a questo furbo qual hanno riconosciuto per Messia; il che li rende confusi in tutte le maniere et questo per giusto giudicio di Dio, per farli ravedere della loro patente cecità et ostinatione.

Delle ricchezze di Agis Mehemet

Non solo sono da computarsi li varii et diversi presenti grandi ricevuti da questo Messia dalli ebrei inviatili da tutte le parti del mondo, ma li particolari: solo due mercanti ebrei d'Olanda (quali non gionsero a tempo) li portavano doi milioni. Per quanto ho inteso, arriva del valente gavato dall'ebraismo a un milione et mezzo.

Della figliola di Galata et del profeta Beniamin di Gaza, questi due li ebrei, si tiene li habbiano fatti morire di morte crudelissima et altrettanto ne saria di q[uesto] vivente Messia anchora se potessero haverlo nelle mani.

“KARAITES” IN EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMSTERDAM*

YOSEF KAPLAN

In a series of articles, Richard Popkin has shown how the Karaites presented an intellectual challenge to the Christian Hebraists and millenarians of the seventeenth century. Similarly, he has proven that the way in which the Karaites were perceived by some of the Hebraists, particularly Richard Simon, also influenced sceptical Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam from the end of the seventeenth century. These Jews tended to see the Karaites as an expression of pure and rational Judaism. I am very pleased to dedicate this article to my dear friend Richard Popkin, whose work has been a constant source of intellectual stimulation for me, opening new paths for understanding historical and intellectual phenomena in early modern Jewish society.

I

In First Adar 5472 (1712), a year and a half before the outbreak of the controversy surrounding Nehemia Hiyya Hayon, in the aftermath of Sabbateanism in Amsterdam, the Spanish and Portuguese community in that city was shaken by another affair, of which only faint echoes have reached us. This latter affair is not mentioned at all in the historiographical literature of Dutch Jewry. Authors of works of that time, such as the documented chronicle written by David Franco Mendes about the history of his community, appear to have attempted to wipe out any trace of it and thus to ignore its implications¹. Modern scholarship has also

* This paper was written at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where I was a research fellow in 1986-1987. An earlier Hebrew version was published in *Zion*, lii (1987), 279-314.

¹ See D. Franco Mendes, *Memorias do Estabelecimento e Progresso dos Judeos Portuguezes e Espanhoes nesta famosa cidade de Amsterdam*, ed. with an Introduction and Annotations by L. Fuks & R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Studia Rosenthaliana*, ix (1975). See p. 104 there, regarding 1712; also regarding the controversy with Nehemia Hiyya Hayon: Franco Mendes is careful not to discuss the matter in detail, see p. 106. See also L. Fuks & R. Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Jewish Historiography in the Netherlands in the 17th and 18th Centuries', in *S. Baron Jubilee Volume, I* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 447ff.; cf. *idem*, 'Joodse geschiedschrijving in de Republiek in de 17e en 18e eeuw', *Studia Rosenthaliana*, vi (1972), 149ff.

skipped over the single explicit mention of that affair which has come down to us, although that testimony is written in the community registers².

First Adar in that year saw an unusual sequence of events: on the seventh of that month (14 February 1712), Solomon Ayllon the *Hakham* (rabbi) of the community, received, by means of a gentile messenger, a shocking letter, deeply upsetting him. The anonymous author of the letter, concealing himself behind the appellation “Luzitano”, i.e., Portuguese, revealed to Ayllon that certain members of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community held views that opposed the Torah of Israel and were acting contrary to its commandments. Ayllon did not delay, and the very next day he placed the anonymous letter on the table of the *Ma’amad* (i.e., the regents of the community)³. As was to be expected in such cases, the *Parnasim* (community leaders) formulated a special announcement, which was read out aloud in the synagogue that very day. In it they demanded, under punishment of excommunication, that the author or authors of the letter, or that anyone who in any way might know something of the identity of its author or authors, come forward within two days and deliver a declaration on the subject to the *Hakham*⁴.

Four days passed and the demand of the *Ma’amad* remained unanswered. The *Parnasim* met again and formulated a second announcement which was read in the synagogue on the twelfth of First Adar (19 February). Again they demanded, more insistently, that the writer of the letter come forward and identify himself, and that anyone who knew anything of the identity of the mysterious “Luzitano” must come and declare as much to *Hakham* Ayllon before four p.m. the next day. This time the *Parnasim* used very strong and threatening language, sharply condemning the author of the letter, and, since he had not revealed his identity, they expressed doubt regarding the purity of his motives⁵. They promised to keep secret the names of anyone who was willing to reveal the

² See the following works, which summarize the history of the Sephardi Jews in Holland: J.S. da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der Portugeesche Joden te Amsterdam 1593-1925* (Amsterdam, 1925); J. d’Ancona, “De Portugese Gemeente Talmoad Tora te 1795”, in *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland, I*, ed. H. Brugmans & A. Frank (Amsterdam, 1940), pp. 270-305; nor are the protagonists of this affair mentioned in J. Meijer, *Encyclopaedia Sefardica Neerlandica I-II* (Amsterdam, 5709-5710).

³ The following seven *Parnasim* were then members of the *Ma’amad*: Abraham Bueno Henriques, Moses de Pinedo, Jacob Aboab Osorio, David Jessurun de Acuña, Isaac Levi Jimenes, Moses Mendes da Costa, and Moses de Joseph Mocata.

⁴ See the archive of the Spanish and Portuguese community in Amsterdam [henceforth: PA 334], which is on deposit in the Municipal Archives, in *Livro de pregões*, I (no. 112) [henceforth: Proclamations, I], pp. 25-26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26: “pois avendo expirado o tempo, e outro tanto mais argue malisia que zelo pois inconsideradam[en]te ha incurido na pena de beraha”.

identity of the mysterious writer, but they also brought out emphatically that those refusing to pass on information on the matter “will be considered rebellious, heretics, and violators of the public order”⁶. They also added that if the anonymous author did not appear before the rabbi and explain his deed, he would be considered sacrilegious: his letter would be taken as a slander, and he would be excommunicated publicly, as stipulated by the established regulations of the community⁷.

On the fourteenth of First Adar (21 February), a day after the deadline set by the *Parnasim* for delivering testimony regarding the contents of the mysterious letter and the identity of its author, a second letter was received from the anonymous writer, in which he repeated the charges raised in his first letter, signing with the same appellation. The second letter was addressed to the *Ma'amad*, and “Luzitano” left the impression that he was frightened to identify himself in public. For their part, the *Parnasim* decided unanimously to grant the anonymous writer of the letter an additional extension so that he might come and identify himself and testify regarding the contents of his charges. In a proclamation read that very day in the synagogue, the members of the *Ma'amad* promised the author of the letter that if he presented himself to them, his identity would be kept a secret. However, if he refrained from showing himself by three p.m. the next day, the full gravity of the law would be levied against him, and he would receive the punishment reserved for “violators of the public order”. That is to say, he would be excommunicated and banished from the Jewish community⁸.

“Luzitano” did not heed the admonitions of the *Ma'amad* and did not appear before the *Hakham* or the *Parnasim*. Hence on the sixteenth of First Adar (23 February), after three days of tense expectation, the members of the *Ma'amad*, with the consent of *Hakham* Ayllon, excommunicated the author of the letters, “whoever he may be, wherever he may be found”⁹.

The identity of “Luzitano” was never discovered by the leaders of the “Spanish and Portuguese Nation”, and his excommunication was in-

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27: “sera tido por rebelde inreligioso e perturbador do sosiego commun”.

⁷ *Ibid.* A regulation forbidding, under threat of Herem, the writing of libels or slanderous letters is mentioned among the basic regulations of the *Talmud Torah* community of 28 Av, 5399, see *Livro de Ascemoth*, A, PA 334, no. 19 [henceforth: *Ascemoth A*], p. 25, no. 43: “Que nenhũa pessoa se atreva a fazer pasq[u]ins, nem papeis diffamatorios, e quem semelhante desaforo fizer, ou mandar fazer por outrem, o hão por posto em Herem e apartado da nação com todas as maldiço[e]ns de nossa s[an]ta ley que lhe cahyão por perturbador na nação”.

⁸ See Proclamations I (above, n. 4), p. 27: “ofresendolhe dittos ssres. guardarlhe todo o secretto com advertensia expresa que em falta que não venha a declarar-se ao S[enhor] H[aha]m ate o ditto tempo de manha a tarde as 3 horas se executara com elle o rigor das ascamot”.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

tended to terminate the entire affair and seal it away. On the face of it, we have here nothing but another story of the daily life of the Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam, giving a glimpse into the climate of intrigue that characterized relations among some of the members of the community, merchants and financiers who had business disputes with each other, or social and family quarrels, vying with each other over the division of power and for leadership of the community. The spreading of rumors and the writing of anonymous leaflets were frequently an expression of the inner conflicts of the Talmud Torah community in Amsterdam, and the community registers are not lacking in examples of this behavior¹⁰.

The unsolved mystery of the letters is, however, more than simply a conflict among rivals: it provides insight into the tense spiritual and intellectual atmosphere that permeated the Sephardi community of Amsterdam in the early eighteenth century. Rabbi Moses Hagiz, who was there at that time, sharply condemned tendencies to throw off the yoke of the commandments which, in his opinion, were characteristic of a good number of Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam: “Since they live in lands where there is liberty combined with wealth, preserved for their undoing, they cast the yoke of the rabbis from their necks”. “Some of those I saw in that diaspora . . . began by doubting the teachings of the sages and ended by denying the Rock who dwells on high”¹¹. Hagiz’s remarks are indeed one-sided and tendentious, and they must be regarded with caution. Nevertheless, one may not ignore the fact that they are corroborated by a chorus of detractors and admonishers from within the community, who made charges similar to his in their writings.

Hagiz’s accusations also fit in with those made by “Luzitano” in his two letters¹². The antinomian views that arose in the Spanish and Portuguese diaspora in western Europe during the seventeenth century, and the reservations concerning the Oral Law voiced by former *conversos* who returned openly to Judaism, received new impetus in the eighteenth century. Deistic and Spinozan views took hold among the Sephardi Jewish intelligentsia whose commitment to the commandments became steadily weaker¹³. In that spiritual climate any sign of open challenge to the

¹⁰ See Y. Kaplan, “The Social Functions of the Herem in the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century”, in *Dutch-Jewish History*, i (1984), 121ff., 137; cf. *idem*, “The Attitude of the Leadership of the Portuguese Community of Amsterdam to the Sabbatean Movement, 5425-5431” (Hebrew), *Zion*, xxxix (1974), 200ff.

¹¹ See Moses Hagiz, *Sefer sefat emet* (Amsterdam, 5467), fol. 4b.

¹² See many examples in Sh. Rosenberg, “Emunat Hakhamim”, in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. I. Twersky & B. Septimus (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), pp. 285-341.

¹³ See *ibid.* and cf. Y. Kaplan, “The Portuguese Community of Amsterdam in the

authority of the *halakha* and the rabbis was sufficient to provoke a vehement reaction among the community leaders. On this occasion it would seem that the *Parnasim* gave up the effort to discover the identity of the author of the condemned letters. However, the information they conveyed was, in the view of the *Parnasim*, so grave that they had to attempt to trace the people suspect of heresy and of violating the Torah. It would not be implausible to assume that the decree of excommunication proclaimed from the pulpit of the synagogue towards the end of First Adar, against Mendes Henriques, also known as David Almanza, and against the brothers Aharon and Isaac Dias da Fonseca was connected to information that reached the ears of the *Parnasim* in the wake of the letters from "Luzitano". The anonymous writer might well have mentioned the names of these suspects in his addresses to Ayllon and the members of the *Ma'amad*.

The writ of excommunication is not dated exactly. Only the month is indicated: First Adar, 5472. The writ was copied into the community register between the decisions of the eighteenth of First Adar and the fifth of Second Adar; hence the three aforementioned members of the community were excommunicated between the nineteenth and the thirtieth of First Adar (between 26 February and 8 March), only a few days after the excommunication against the unknown author of the letters¹⁴. The content of the writ of excommunication supports our argument regarding the direct connection between the two affairs:

It was made known to the lords of the *Ma'amad* that David Mendes Henriques, known as David Almanza, and Aharon and Isaac Dias da Fonseca are following the sect of Karaites and act as they do, entirely denying the Oral Law, which is the foundation and underpinning of our Holy Law. After the lords of the *Ma'amad*, in the presence of the *Hakham*, attempted to make them return from their devious ways and to bring them to the way of truth, and were unsuccessful, for they were steadfast in their waywardness, and continued to maintain their harmful and heretical beliefs, and since we are charged with the duty of purifying the evil from among us, of warning against doing such a pernicious evil, so as not to scatter its poison and so that it will not spread and infect others, the lords of the *Ma'amad* decided unanimously, and with the consent of the lord *Hakham*, to proclaim a decree of excommunication against the three aforementioned men, and to expel them from the nation¹⁵.

Seventeenth Century: between Tradition and Change'' (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences*, vii (1986), 164ff. The early reception of deistic and Spinozan ideas in the Sephardi Jewish society of Western Europe from the seventeenth century onward has not yet been sufficiently studied.

¹⁴ See *Livro de Ascamoth*, B, PA 334, n° 20 [henceforth: *Ascamoth B*], p. 572, and see the appendix at the end of this article.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*; the *Parnasim* who signed the writ of excommunication are those mentioned above, n. 3.

It should be emphasized that the wording of the writ of excommunication, presented below, is almost entirely identical to that proclaimed against Spinoza¹⁶. Moreover, out of almost fifty excommunications declared against various members of the Spanish and Portuguese community of Amsterdam from 1623 to 1712, only that against Spinoza of 1656 and that against the three “Karaites” of 1712 use the severe formulation based mainly on that appearing in *Sefer Kol Bo*¹⁷. Thus we find that the seven *Parnasim* who signed the writ of excommunication against Mendes Henriques and the Dias da Fonseca brothers viewed the affair of the “Karaites” of their time as a grave threat to the unity of the congregation, equal in gravity to the earlier heresy of Spinoza.

The excommunication of the “Karaites” raises not a few perplexing questions. Who were these three “Karaites”, and what was the intellectual content and the practical expression of their “Karaism”? Were they truly Karaites, who identified with the doctrines and conceptions of Karaism as consolidated until that generation? Did the excommunicators use the term “Karaite” merely as a pejorative label, or did they refer to a definite group of people with Karaite views? As for the three excommunicants, did they view themselves as connected with the Karaite communities existing in Poland, Lithuania, the Crimea, Turkey, and Egypt at that time? Could it be that they attempted to establish a Karaite community in Amsterdam and that their effort was nipped in the bud by the prompt and vigorous action of the leaders of the Talmud Torah community? Was this a marginal affair, a one-time effort of only three members of the community, or are we dealing with a more widespread phenomenon, one with firm ideological roots, nourished by the social and cultural milieu of the members of the Amsterdam community?

To address these questions we must first ascertain the place of Karaism in the ideological world of the Spanish and Portuguese community in Holland from its beginning, i.e., the early seventeenth century, until the affair presently under discussion.

¹⁶ See *Ascamoth A* (above, n. 7), p. 408; the wording of Spinoza's excommunication was first printed by J. van Vloten, *Ad Benedicti de Spinoza Opera quae supersunt omnia Supplementum* (Amsterdam, 1862), pp. 290-293; cf. I.S. Révah, *Spinoza et Juan de Prado* (Paris & The Hague, 1959), pp. 57-58; H.P. Salomon, “La vraie excommunication de Spinoza”, in *Forum Litterarum. Miscelânea de Estudos Literários, Linguísticos et Históricos oferecida a J.J. van den Besselaar*, ed. H. Bots & M. Kerkhof (Amsterdam & Maarsen, 1984), pp. 184-185.

¹⁷ See Kaplan, “Herem” (*op. cit.*, above, n. 10), pp. 111ff. There I wrote that in 1623-1683, 36 members of the Spanish and Portuguese community of Amsterdam were excommunicated. Since then I have managed to find four more cases of excommunication in that period, and, together with those excommunicated up to 1712, there are at least 50 instances; the data will be published in detail elsewhere. Regarding the wording of the writ of excommunication against Spinoza see Sh. Biderman & A. Kasher,

II

The penetrating discussion in early modern European society regarding the authority of tradition also affected the community of former *conversos* who had returned to Judaism in western Europe during the seventeenth century¹⁸. Although most of those joining the Jewish community protested their absolute identification with the venerable Jewish tradition, and primarily with the world of the Talmud and the *halakha*, nevertheless, among those returning to the bosom of Judaism there were not a few who brought with them from the world of their apostasy demands for spiritualistic reform in Judaism. Others held sceptical, deistic, or atheistic views. Prominent among them were those who expressed reservations regarding the validity of substantial strata of the Jewish tradition and who challenged the authority of the Oral Law and the legitimacy of the spiritual leadership of the rabbis and scholars¹⁹. Naturally, in expressing reservations about the Talmud and rabbinical decrees and in freeing themselves of significant parts of post-biblical Jewish productivity, these heterodox thinkers in Amsterdam and in other centers of the Sephardi diaspora aroused the concern of the leaders of the community and its rabbis. They frequently found hints of Karaite views in the criticism voiced by the heterodox thinkers, as well as an affinity with the condemnation voiced by the Karaites against Talmudic Judaism. As early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, the appellation "Karaite" was routinely and commonly used in the disputes waged within the western Sephardi communities against "the doubters and those who, in our time, throw off the Oral Law"²⁰. The intention of spiritual leaders of the "Spanish

"Spinoza's Excommunication" (Hebrew), *Special Colloquium to mark the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Death of Benedict Spinoza* (Tel-Aviv, 1971), pp. 31ff.; see the recent article by Salomon, *op. cit.* (above, n. 16), pp. 181-199, giving a detailed analysis of the sources of the wording of the writ of excommunication against Spinoza, and especially the Spanish translation of the formula in *Sefer kol-bo*, which reached Amsterdam from Venice in late 1618, at the time of the controversy revolving around the opinions of David Pharar.

¹⁸ From the rich literature on this subject I shall merely mention: P. Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne* (Paris, 1935) [Eng. trans.: *The European Mind, 1680-1715* (Cleveland & New York, 1963)]; R. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (rev. edn, New York, 1964); *idem*, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley, 1979); Th.K. Rabb, *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1975), pp. 35-59.

¹⁹ See Y. Sonne, "Spinoza's 'Judaism'" (Hebrew), *Hadoar*, xiii (1934-1935), 56, 60; Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism. The Life and Works of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 108ff.

²⁰ See Samuel Aboab, *Sefer Dvar Shmuel* (Venice, 5462), no. 152, fol. 52b. See Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim" (*op. cit.* above, n. 12), p. 286. I do not agree with Rosenberg that this was an "abortive movement", a Protestant form of Judaism that did not gather enough strength to change things. Rather than solid views, the scanty evidence in our hands points to frames of mind that were common among people at the fringes

and Portuguese Nation” in using the term “Karaites” was to prove that the ideas of those who condemned Talmudic and rabbinical literature were not new, and that their arguments had already been expressed by the Karaites centuries before. By identifying the anti-Talmudic criticism within the community with Karaite views, they were also able to argue that in fact it was possible to refute the criticism of their contemporary opponents with the detailed arguments used by the Jewish sages in their treatises against Karaism and its offshoots over the generations.

For their part the heterodox thinkers frequently were not averse to viewing the Karaites as a positive reference group, even using arguments from their doctrines to combat Jewish Talmudic exegesis of the Bible. They regarded the separate and independent existence of the Karaites over centuries as proof of the victory of their argument that Talmudic Judaism did not represent the entire Jewish people but rather a sector of it, and not necessarily the sector possessing the correct interpretation of the Torah of Moses. Thus, for example, Uriel da Costa twice refers to Karaism in his arguments against the Oral Law. In his first objection, to the use of phylacteries, Da Costa wrote, among other things:

It would appear that the differences among the Jews themselves in putting them on – that the Ashkenazis wear them during the intermediate days of the holidays, but without saying the benediction, whereas the Levantines do not, and the Karaites do neither one nor the other – are such that these differences of opinion do not appear to have been received with the Torah, but that people invented them, so that everyone does as he wishes²¹.

In his second objection, to circumcision, Da Costa emphasizes that “The Torah, on the one hand, and the custom of the Turks and Karaites on the other regarding uncovering the corona during circumcision indicates that it is a new custom and therefore not a good one”²². In neither case does Da Costa show ideological identification with the Karaites. He did not see himself as belonging to their sect, he did not present himself as

of the community and were threatening to it as such. There is no evidence of an actual attempt to organize as a sect to reform Judaism, and all the initiatives were on the part of individuals. Cf. Kaplan, “Community” (*op. cit.* above, n. 13), pp. 169ff. These individuals did not come from the class of the very wealthy, nor were they affiliated with the circles of the *Parnasim*. Cf. Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 316ff. Rosenberg presents a detailed discussion of the various sources that relate to the phenomenon of criticism against the Oral Law and against rabbinical regulations from the early seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, but he does not distinguish between the background of that criticism and its character in the early seventeenth century and the motivations and sources for criticism at the end of that century and afterwards. He treats the phenomenon as a single unit. In the present article I attempt to show that this was not the case.

²¹ Printed in C. Gebhardt, *Die Schriften des Uriel da Costa* (Amsterdam, Heidelberg & London, 1922), p. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

an advocate of their views, and he did not have a preference in principle for their interpretations as opposed to those of others. However, in the controversies between the Karaites and Talmudic Judaism he found support for his main argument, which was that the Oral Law was a human interpretation of the Torah of Moses, which only part of Judaism accepts, and that "it is a great heresy to make it equal to the divine law and say that we are obliged to observe the dictates of the Talmud just like the Torah of Moses"²³.

As early as the second decade of the seventeenth century several leaders of the Spanish and Portuguese nation were shocked by the "Karaite tones" which they heard, as it were, in various expressions of *conversos* who had just arrived. The first testimony to the sensitivity of the rabbis of the community to the affinity with Karaism prevalent among some of the members is found in the statements of Rabbi Isaac Uziel²⁴, as related by Hector Mendes Bravo at the end of 1617, in testimony before the Inquisitional court in Lisbon. Bravo was a Portuguese *converso* who returned to Judaism, but later, not having found his place among the Jews, he went back to Portugal and was received in the bosom of the Church. He told the Inquisitors that during his sojourn in Amsterdam from 1612 to 1617 he had spoken to *Hakham* Uziel, arguing that one must not interpret Isaiah 53 "the way the Jewish rabbis understand and interpret it", as though the prophecy referred "to the entire Jewish people and to all the troubles to which they are subject", "for it cannot be that private circumstances relating to an individual person should be interpreted as relating to an entire nation". Uziel replied to Mendes Bravo that he must "remove himself from the views of the Karaites", for those who advocate them are heretics²⁵.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9. Without entering into a controversy here regarding the authorship of *Kol sakhal*, we may at least point out that that author did not identify with Karaism at all, and he too mentions it in order to prove the weakness of the arguments of the "Pharisees", as though their interpretation of the Torah came from Moses at Sinai. See *Kol sakhal* in Y. Sh. Regio, *Behinat hakabbalah* (Gorizia, 1852), p. 21: "For even among the nations famous today who are not Jews and the sect of the Karaites who are from our nation, each of them claims that it is the one which observes the Torah of Moses in its correct form, and as it should be understood". Elsewhere he expresses his negative attitude towards Karaism: "The stupid Karaites wanted to understand things . . . , like a child who, if someone asks it for two grains of salt, will give him exactly two grains, or if his father sees him fidgeting he will tell him not to move, and he will want to stay in his place forever" (p. 22).

²⁴ On his activities in Amsterdam see Franco Mendes (*op. cit.* above, n. 1), pp. 16-17; he remained there from 1610 until his death in 1622.

²⁵ See C. Roth, "The Strange Case of Hector Mendes Bravo", *Heb. Union Coll. Ann.*, xviii (1944), 242-243: this affair is briefly mentioned by Rosenberg (*op. cit.* above, n. 12), p. 288; cf. M. Idel, "Different Conceptions of Kabbalah in the Early 17th Century", in *Jewish Thought*, ed. Twersky & Septimus, p. 148, n. 47. The conversation with Uziel

In 1615, close to the time of that consultation between Uziel and Mendes Bravo, the rabbi of Venice, Rabbi Judah Arieḥ Modena, responded to a question from Amsterdam: “What is the definition of Karaism, and who should be called a Karaite?” This query indeed strengthens the impression that the subject had become quite sensitive within the social and intellectual life of the new community in Amsterdam which was beginning to be consolidated. In his response, Rabbi Modena rejected what appeared to him to be an exaggerated tendency to regard as a sign of Karaism any critical approach to the literature of Aggadah and Midrash, or any effort to interpret it intellectually, or a preference for the literal exegesis of the Torah. In his brief response he stated:

In our generation Karaism is defined by the rejection of the Gemara and Rabbinic legislation made since the destruction of the Temple, as adduced by the thirteen principles for interpreting the Torah, and, as it is written, “Thou shalt act according to this Torah which they will teach you” and in the performance of commandments, they accept only the superficiality of what is written and what they have made up by themselves as an interpretation and tradition, both in positive and negative commandments²⁶.

However even Rabbi J.A. Modena, who sought to restrict the definition of Karaism and prevent confusion between it and other heterodox phenomena in Jewish society, did not refrain from pointing out the connection between the heresy of his age and the sects which departed from Judaism from Second Temple times onward, including Karaism. In a letter which he wrote to the leaders of the Hamburg community in 1616-1617, in response to the first heretical teachings of Uriel da Costa, even before the latter settled in Amsterdam, Rabbi J.A. Modena spoke out against him in the following terms:

We have heard, and our heart melts within us, that the spirit has risen in a man of your community, an evil spirit that impels him to speak infamities against the Oral Law and the teachings of our sages of blessed memory. Whether he is a Sadducee, a Boethusian, or a Karaite, what his opinion is, we do not know. But it is sufficient that he is a heretic and utter Epicurean, in challenging the words of our rabbis of sacred memory²⁷.

These words of J.A. Modena do not accuse Da Costa explicitly of an actual connection with Karaism, and, rather than expressing a clear-cut

apparently took place in late 1616 or early 1617, during the last few days of Mendes Bravo's stay in Amsterdam, when his doubts had already undermined his faith in Judaism, and he had decided to return to Christianity.

²⁶ See Judah Arieḥ of Modena, *Sheelot uteshuvoṭ zikney Yehudah*, ed. Sh. Simonson (Jerusalem, 1957), no. 77, p. 99.

²⁷ See Gebhardt (*op. cit.* above, n. 21), p. 150.

opinion in that matter, they betray a strain of doubt. However this statement by the rabbi of Venice joined other voices with a similar tone, speaking out at that time against the agitators among the Sephardi diaspora in western Europe, who challenged the authority of the Oral Law. Rabbi J.A. Modena wrote in more explicit terms concerning the connection between Da Costa's objections to the Oral Law and the Karaite heresy in his work, *Magen vetsina* (*Shield and Bulwark*):

The objections or questions of a certain person against the Oral Law and certain of its interpretations have come to us, ten in number, and I did not have to study them a great deal in order to find answers, because he was not the first, nor is it just from today that people ask questions like that and more. Our forefathers have already replied to them with more than sufficient answers, because those sects began at the end of Second Temple days and after the destruction, and they always fought together against our sages, especially one of them, named Anan. Since he wasn't ordained as Gaon, his heart was resentful, and he caused Israel to stray from the tradition of the prophets and sages and wrote books and raised up many disciples. Nevertheless the Lord of truth came to the assistance of the truths of His Torah, so that they did not take root in the world, and the sages and rabbis always had the upper hand²⁸.

Rabbi Moses Raphael D'Aguilar, in his Portuguese treatise against Da Costa's objections to the Oral Law, which he completed in Amsterdam on the fifth of Adar, 5399 (28 February 1639), also followed the path of Rabbi J.A. Modena. He viewed the heresy of his own day as a link in a chain of sects and schisms that broke off from the heart of Judaism from the end of the Second Temple period onward, with the Karaism founded by Anan being a central link in this chain²⁹. There can be no doubt that D'Aguilar made use of J.A. Modena's work, for whole passages of his own treatise are literal translations of *Magen vetsina*³⁰.

²⁸ See *Magen vetsina*, ed. A. Geiger (Breslau, 5616), fol. 3b. On the relation of Rabbi J.A. Modena to Karaism see also *Beit Yehuda* (Venice, 5395), II, fol. 6a: "And the more they desire a more exact solution to the word, the more they are distant from the true meaning, as happened to the sect of Karaites and to those who discover meaning in the Torah opposed to the Halakha". Cf. L. Modena, *Historia de gli riti hebraici* (Paris, 1637), pp. 204ff.: "De gli Heretici Hebrei e de Carraim". In Modena's opinion, as expressed in this work, the Karaim are reformed Sadducees, who took their belief in the eternal life of the soul for fear of the Christians and Moslems, who also believe in it. See: E. Rivkin, *Leon da Modena and the Kol Sakhal* (Cincinnati, 1952), pp. 61, 76-77.

²⁹ See Mosseh Raphael D'Aguilar, *Resposta a certas propostas contra a tradição*, MS Ets Haim / Livraria Montezinos 48 A 11, pp. 335-391: "Porque no ultimo tempo do segundo Templo tiverão principio estas sectas, e depois da ruina do mesmo sempre hão contendido com os nossos Hachamim, em particular no tempo de Rabi Jehuda Gaon (Como escreue Arabad no seu livro Salselet acabala) ouve hum Hacham chamado Hanen [sic] que por não haver sido intitulado Gaon agravou e soblevou Israel a reprovar a tradição dos Prophetas e sabios, e compos muitos livros, e instituiu muitos discipulos".

³⁰ Compare the quotation in n. 29 to that from *Magen vetsina* in n. 28; cf. Modena,

In Venice, between 1616 and 1625, Immanuel Aboab wrote a comprehensive and detailed treatise in praise of the Oral Law. The work was printed in Amsterdam in 1629, a year after the author's death³¹. This book, the *Nomologia*, he wrote against those of his people

who say and argue with stiffness of neck that one should not place one's faith in the true interpretation of the holy Torah, received by the ancient sages of Israel and taught by them, claiming that one may understand scripture, whose perfection is beyond measure, from within itself, and that all of them will understand it fully with a little bit of study, and that one need merely read it and observe it as it is written³².

The words which he wrote at the beginning of his work imply that the book touched upon an acute problem which disturbed the Sephardi diaspora in western Europe; Sephardi Jews from Venice, Amsterdam, and Hamburg implored Aboab to publish his book³³. However it must be pointed out that in his entire work Aboab never felt impelled to postulate an actual connection between the deniers of the Oral Law, with whom he was disputing and whom he was rebuking, and the Karaite sect, which he did not even mention by name. He was apparently convinced that the root of the problem lay in the inadequate Jewish education of the former *conversos*³⁴. Hence he saw no need to point to the possible connections and affinities between heretics in his time and the heretical sects who abandoned Judaism over the generations. That was also the approach taken by other authors in the Sephardi diaspora of western Europe in the seventeenth century, who came out in defence of the Oral Law and the authority of the rabbinical tradition³⁵. The appellation “Karaite” is mentioned here and there in their works, but not in application to a real group acting in the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish society of their time. In the Sephardi Jewish polemical literature of the seventeenth century the concept “Karaism” had become synonymous with the schismatics and sec-

Magen vetsina, fol. 4a: “And I the author testify that I saw in the great Karaite author Rabbi Aharon's book that they admit the Oral Law”. This passage was translated into Portuguese by D'Aguilar, *ibid.*, p. 358.

³¹ See I. Aboab, *Nomologia, o Discursos Legales* ([Amsterdam], 5389). For the date of this work's composition see C. Roth, “Immanuel Aboab's Proselytization of the Marranos”, *Jew. Qly. Rev.*, xxiii (1932), 128. Cf. Rosenberg (*op. cit.* above, n. 12), p. 300.

³² See Aboab, *Nomologia*, p. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 6: “Con todo, auiendo entendido algunos señores mios, ansi en la ciudad de Venecia, como en la de Amsterdam, que este mi trauajo ya en grado de poderse ver; me persuadieron a deuelro comunicar a todos . . . Mas todavia aora de nueuo me bueluen a mandar, assi ellos mismos, con otros señores de Hamburgo, que les comunique, y haga imprimir todo el libro enteramente”.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

³⁵ See Kaplan, *Orobio* (*op. cit.* above, n. 19), pp. 286-307.

tarians, and some writers used it as a general term for heresy and blasphemy³⁶.

However, it cannot be that in the aforementioned writ of excommunication of 1712 against Mendes Henriques and the Dias da Fonseca brothers the term "Karaite" was merely a general pejorative label. Let us not forget that on this occasion we are not merely dealing with polemic literature, but with a writ of excommunication, and in documents of this character the *Parnasim* and rabbis endeavored to write the details of the transgression faithfully and scrupulously. In the registers of the community they did not tend to use metaphorical language or literary similes, and the formulations were extremely close to the reality.

The writ of excommunication leaves no room for doubt: it does not say that the three transgressors were similar in their views and behavior to Karaites, but it says explicitly that they "follow after the sect of the Karaites". For the first time since the foundation of the Sephardi community in Amsterdam, and for the first time in the western Sephardi diaspora, Sephardi Jews whose identity is known were accused of an actual connection with the Karaite sect. It would seem that not only did the leadership discern a clear link with Karaism in their deeds, but that they identified themselves as Karaites in the deliberations and discussions that took place between themselves, the *Parnasim*, and the *Hakham* in the days preceding the excommunication, when the community leaders "attempted to make them return from their devious ways and to bring them to the way of truth, and were unsuccessful, for they were steadfast in their waywardness, and continued to maintain their harmful and heretical beliefs"³⁷. If that is the case, we are left with our original difficulty: did the three excommunicated men have actual connections with the Karaism of their day? And if they were drawn to Karaism, from what sources did they derive their information about it, and what was the actual content of their Karaite views?

³⁶ See Abraham I. Pereyra, *Espejo de la Vanidad del Mundo* (Amsterdam, 5431), p. 296: "y mayormente los miserables, que recogiendo, despues de haver idolatrado toda su vida, prevaricado todos los divinos preceptos, sin haver hecho penitencia, ni demostracion de arrepentirse de sus pecados, de repente se consuman sabios; y assi ignoran unos la Tradicion, y otros la niegan, llegando solamente a lo literal del Texto Sacro imitando a los *Carraim* o *Ereges*". [Emphasis in original.] Cf. Rosenberg (*op. cit.* above, n. 12), p. 293.

³⁷ See below, the appendix to this article.

III

The connections between the members of the Sephardi community of Amsterdam and the centers of Karaism during the seventeenth century were rather limited, which was generally the case regarding connections between the Jewish world and the Karaites at that time³⁸. In fact, the contacts of the Sephardis in Amsterdam with Karaites were restricted to a very short period, surrounding only two figures: Rabbi Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (the Yashar of Candia), and Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel. The first came to Amsterdam in 1626 and for a certain time he served as the rabbi and preacher in the Beth Israel community, which was then one of three Sephardi congregations in the city³⁹. A great friendship flourished at that time between him and Menasseh ben Israel, the *Hakham* of the Neveh Shalom community, who initiated the publication of two works by the Yashar, printing them in the printshop that he established in 1627⁴⁰. *Sefer elim* and *Sefer ma'ayan ganim*, published in 1629, show the intellectual and scientific connections between Delmedigo and a Karaite from Lithuania, Zerah ben Nathan of Troki⁴¹.

The readers of these two works were not only exposed directly to the spiritual and intellectual desires of a group of Karaite intellectuals of that generation, but they could also imbibe the positive attitude of the Yashar

³⁸ See J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature, II* (Philadelphia, 1935), pp. 675ff.

³⁹ See I. Barzilay, *Yoseph Shlomo Delmedigo (Yashar of Candia). His Life, Works and Times* (Leiden, 1974); on his sojourn in Amsterdam see pp. 78ff. Barzilay writes that the Yashar came to Amsterdam in the summer of 1628, perhaps even earlier, but he did not see the important article by J. d'Ancona, "Delmedigo, Menasseh ben Israel en Spinoza", *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Genootschap voor de Joodsche Wetenschap in Nederland*, vi (1940), 105-152, which published the agreement signed by the Beth Israel community with Delmedigo on 5 Tammuz 5386 (29 June 1626), according to which he took it upon himself to serve as *Hakham* and preacher in that congregation for a year; see pp. 123, 148-149. The original of that agreement is found in *Livro dos Termos deste Kahal Kados de Bet Israel*, PA 334 (above, n. 4), no. 10. Cf. W.C. Pieterse, *Daniel Levi de Barrios als geschiedschrijver, etc.* (Amsterdam, 1968), pp. 153-154, which published a more precise version of that document; on the Beth Israel community see: Franco Mendes (*op. cit.* above, n. 1), p. 31, and see p. 157, n. 83 in the editors' comments. Delmedigo apparently left Amsterdam in 1629. Cf. Révah, *Spinoza (op. cit.* above, n. 16), p. 17.

⁴⁰ On the relations between the Yashar and Menasseh ben Israel see D'Ancona (*op. cit.* above, n. 39), 124-133; cf. C. Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1945), pp. 82, 132ff. On the printing of the two books see L. Fuks & R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands 1585-1815, I* (Leiden, 1984), nos. 150-151, pp. 116-117. On the Neveh Shalom congregation see Franco Mendes (*op. cit.* above, n. 1), pp. 15ff.

⁴¹ Zerah ben Nathan was born in Troki, apparently in 1578; he was active in Birze and was one of the disciples of the Karaite Joseph Malinovski. Zerah was well educated and had a large library, and he was interested in philosophy and the sciences. His correspondence with Delmedigo began in 1620. He died in 5418 (1657-1658). See Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, in the index, especially pp. 726-732; cf. Barzilay (*op. cit.* above,

of Candia towards the Karaites, whom he saw as a branch of the Jewish people, and they could savor his critical remarks about the "sons of the rabbis"⁴². It would seem that the image of the Karaites as thirsty for knowledge and students of non-Jewish wisdom which the Yashar disseminated in his works penetrated the consciousness of some of the intellectuals belonging to the community of former *conversos* in Amsterdam, who were also well versed in philosophy and science. It would not be farfetched to postulate that at least some echo of the ambivalent and biting comments critical of the rabbis and in praise of the Karaites which are found in other writings by Delmedigo also reached the ears of Menasseh ben Israel and others of the Yashar's interlocutors in Amsterdam. It would seem likely that these men heard him speak with open respect for "the wise masters of scripture [Karaites] who study with me; and everywhere they knew me their souls clung to me. They love external knowledge and at their request I wrote what I have written"⁴³. Delmedigo's interlocutors also certainly understood the mockery concealed behind his words about the "sons of the rabbis":

For I knew that their desire was solely for the Talmud and rabbinic authorities, and in that they do well, for that is their daily bread, since they live by the rabbinate or by serving as judges, supporting each other, and these are things the fruits of which a man eats in this world, while the principal remains in the world to come, which is not true of natural sciences. For they are of little use to the body and do great damage to the soul from the theological errors, and he who would preserve his soul must distance himself from these studies, for they are against the nature of the Jews, for if a man gives birth to one hundred he wants them all to be Talmudists⁴⁴.

It would seem likely that the associates of the Yashar of Candia in Amsterdam heard him express himself, saying, "There is no need for books of the Gemara except for one who is called a Tanna or an Amora, who makes a living only from it, and this is the main goal of all Torah scholars, though they are of no use to scholars of scripture [i.e., the Karaites]"⁴⁵. Similarly, they probably heard him praise "the liturgical

n. 39), in the index. Delmedigo had connections with other Karaites, including Yoshiyahu ben Judah of Troki and Ezra ben Nissan the physician of Vilna. See Mann (*op. cit.*), pp. 612 ff.; Barzilay (*op. cit.*), pp. 69-72, 98, 180-181.

⁴² See Barzilay (*op. cit.*), pp. 311-314.

⁴³ See Joseph (Solomon) of Candia, *Sefer Nivlut Hokhma* (Basel, 5391 [1631]), introduction, fol. 7a.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See *Iggeret ahuz* in the full version printed by A. Geiger, *Melo Hofnayim* (Berlin, 5600 [1800]), p. 14. Without doubt this version was the one seen by Menasseh ben Israel, who published a censored version of it in the introduction to *Ma'ayan ganim*. The Parnasim and rabbis of the three Sephardi communities in Amsterdam intervened in the publication of this work. See the two decisions of the six *deputados* of the three communities of

poems composed by the sages of the Karaites, for all their prayers come from the words of the prophets”⁴⁶. They also must have heard his praise of the Karaite commentaries on the Torah: “For in the books of the Karaites you will find an explanation of the words of Rabbi Ibn Ezra, because he draws out and pulls out most of his commentaries from their predecessors such as Rabbi Jeshuah and Rabbi Japhet and Rabbi Judah the Parsi”⁴⁷. Menasseh ben Israel’s closeness to Delmedigo, who left Amsterdam soon after the publication of his works, opened a pathway for him to the Karaites in Lithuania. Zerah ben Nathan wrote to him, apparently in the early 1640s, sending him a florid letter, in which he asks the Amsterdam rabbi “who is in charge of those who write with an iron pen”, to print two works by Karaite authors: *Hizuk haemuna* (*The Strengthening of Faith*) by Isaac of Troki, and *Haelef Lekha*, a liturgical poem by Joseph ben Mordecai Malinovski⁴⁸.

Menasseh ben Israel’s response has not come down to us, but it is clear that he did not accede to the first request of Zerah the Karaite, for he did not print *Hizuk haemuna*. Throughout the seventeenth century the Jews of Amsterdam refrained from printing polemical books against Christianity, because the authorities of the city and the Republic forbade the Jews to publish invective against Christianity, and the Jews were very careful not to arouse their wrath⁴⁹. However, the well-known work by Isaac of Troki, which was very popular among the Jews, was also available to the Sephardi Jews of Holland, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they even translated it into Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and French, circulating it in various manuscripts⁵⁰.

13 May and 2 September 1629, in D’Ancona (*op. cit.* above, n. 39), 125ff., 149ff. The original documents are found in *Livro dos termos da Ymposta da Nação*, PA 334, no. 13, pp. 24v, 26v.

⁴⁶ *Iggeret ahuz*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20. See also the following words: “In this excellence in interpreting the Scriptures I include all the Karaite commentators such as the book by Rabbi Jacob the author of *Ha’ eser* and the book *Hamivhar*, and the book *Keter Torah* and everything they interpreted in the prophets and writings. They are all clear and pleasant and close to the literal meaning”.

⁴⁸ The letter was first printed in A. Neubauer, *Aus der Petersburger Bibliothek* (Leipzig, 1866), pp. 124-125, and, with certain corrections in Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, pp. 1225-1228.

⁴⁹ See J. Meijer, “Hugo Grotius’ Remonstrantie”, *Jew. Soc. Stud.*, xvii (1955), 100.

⁵⁰ The work was translated into Spanish as early as 1621, by Rabbi Isaac Athias of Hamburg, and in the Ets Haim collection there are two copies of this translation, one of 1624, the other of 1663 (MSS 48 C 6 and 48 D 5). Other translations in that collection are: one into Portuguese by Solomon Benveniste, apparently from the early eighteenth century (MS 48 C 14, 15); one into Dutch in 1729, by Daniel de la Penha (MS 48 C 26); one into French in 1730, in the city of Rotterdam (MS 48 C 17, 18). In the Ets Haim collection is also found a Hebrew transcription of the second part of the work, from the seventeenth century (MS 47 C 13); see L. Fuks & R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew and Ju-*

Zerah's second request was granted by Menasseh ben Israel, and in 1643 he printed the liturgical poem by Joseph Malinovski⁵¹. However, these contacts between Menasseh ben Israel and the Karaites of Lithuania, which certainly did not please the leadership of the Sephardi community in Amsterdam, neither deepened nor expanded. In fact, after that time no further evidence has come down to us regarding actual contact between the Sephardis of Holland and authentic Karaites anywhere. It would seem that the leaders of the Spanish and Portuguese community in Amsterdam, a community which grew ever stronger after its unification in 1639, nipped these ties of Menasseh ben Israel in the bud. Moreover, these literary contacts with the Karaites of Lithuania seem to have had no impact upon Menasseh ben Israel's views on Karaism. In the first volume of his great work, *Conciliador*, which was published in Spanish three years after he published the two works by the Yashar of Candia previously mentioned, not only did Menasseh ben Israel repeat the standard and common expressions of condemnation for the Karaites, but he also added his own expressions of contempt and rejection: "And Saadia [Gaon] defeated them [the Karaites], and as a result, very few are left who advocate their repugnant view, and they who still remain are unable to compose any kind of book, and they are ignorant and outcast by all Jewish communities"⁵². Even those who would take these remarks as lip service cannot point to any positive or favorable remark about the Karaites anywhere in Menasseh ben Israel's opus, and there is no reason at all to suspect him of an ideological affinity with Karaism⁵³.

daic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections, II. Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim: Livraria Montezinos Sephardic Community of Amsterdam (Leiden, 1975), nos. 188, 192, 211, 212, 217, 222.

⁵¹ See Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, pp. 730-731. On Joseph Malinovski, one of the closest disciples of Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, see the index of Mann, and esp. pp. 718ff. In the Ets Haim collection two copies of this book are found: on the title page of one of them it is written that it was copied by Zerah bar Nathan, and on the second it is written that it was copied by Moses ben Nachman. See Fuks & Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography* (*op. cit.* above, n. 40), no. 170, p. 125; apparently the name of Zerah bar Nathan was removed from part of the edition so as not to arouse the anger of the leaders of the community, who remembered him from the time of the printing of *Sefer elim*; cf. Roth, *Menasseh ben Israel* (*op. cit.* above, n. 40), pp. 319ff., n. 10.

⁵² See Menasseh ben Israel, *Conciliador o de la conveniencia de los Lugares de la S. Escritura, que repugnantes entre si parecen* (Frankfurt, 1632), p. 262. It must be noted that at that time the image of the Karaites common among the Jews of western Europe was extremely negative; see for example S. Luzzatto, *Discorso circa il stato de gl'Hebrei, etc.* (Venice, 1638), p. 85r: "The Karaites are but few in number, their property is meager, and their authority is almost nil. Moreover: among the nations of the world their station is humbler than the rest of the Jews. Their name, 'Karaites', meaning careful readers, comes from their expertise in knowledge of the grammatical structure of Scripture more than they are expert in its true interpretation".

⁵³ Cf. D'Ancona (*op. cit.* above, n. 39), 130-133, who, in my opinion, exaggerates Delmedigo's influence on Menasseh ben Israel.

Delmedigo's complex compositions doubtlessly impressed a certain type of intellectual in the Amsterdam community, one whose ears were open to any criticism of the rabbinical establishment and Talmudic Judaism, but there was nothing in those books capable of bringing together a circle of Karaite sympathizers in the city. Moreover, the opinions of the Yashar of Candia regarding the study of the Talmud, on the one hand, and involvement with the sciences, on the other, were ambivalent and fuzzy, and the reader of his works will find contradictory statements on these matters⁵⁴.

D'Ancona has pointed out interesting influences of Delmedigo upon the young Spinoza. In that a book by Delmedigo (D'Ancona believes it was *Sefer Elim*)⁵⁵ was in Spinoza's library, and on the basis of the parallels, which are not few in number, between passages in *Sefer Elim* and Spinoza's "Short Treatise", D'Ancona concluded that the Yashar was one of the sources upon which the philosopher of Amsterdam drew in his first composition⁵⁶. Even if D'Ancona is correct in his statement, the passages in question deal with the relation of the divinity to the universe, and they have no relation whatsoever to Karaite views of any kind. The Yashar was no Karaite, and he was far from having any intention of winning souls for Karaism. In a place such as Amsterdam his works could only have served as a kind of catalyst to spur people on and encourage existing tendencies critical of the Talmud and the *halakha*. We have no proof that his works, which are full of contradictions and reversals, had any real influence on the consolidation of a critical consciousness of the

⁵⁴ See *Sefer elim*, p. 57: "Hence acquisition of expertise precedes acquisition of true intellectual knowledge, and there are not a few of our nation who never touch the Torah or study Gemara and do not even understand rabbinical decrees, and some of them do not even understand the holy language well, and they recite in choruses what they learned in the words of the poets and the authors in the languages of the gentiles and mix into them something of the words of the divine Christians or the secrets of the kabbalists, though they don't understand even two or three grains of it. . . . If they merely were contemptuous of the verses, I would be silent, for they talk of the Torah, and, in the final analysis, they are good, and they would merely be like school children, whose breath keeps the world going, but they disturb scholars in their study of the Talmud and make fun of its syllogisms and say that it's only a waste of time and there is no perfection for a person in it". See also *ibid.*, p. 62: "And this warning is for the fathers who cause the children to sin by sending them to Padua to study philosophy before they are illuminated by the light of the Torah, and they ought to have first stamped their soul well with the stamp of faith so they would not abandon it". It is known that the Yashar studied in Padua for a few years. See Barzilay (*op. cit.* above, n. 39), pp. 35-47. On Jewish students who received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from that university up to the beginning of the seventeenth century see D. Carpi, "Jews with the Degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Padua in the Early Seventeenth Century" (Hebrew), in *Memorial Volume for Nathan ben Moses David Cassuto* (Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 62-91.

⁵⁵ See D'Ancona (*op. cit.* above, n. 39), 106ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 133ff. Cf. Révah, *Spinoza* (*op. cit.* above, n. 16), p. 17.

Talmudic tradition, nor can any influence be sought in them for the consolidation of a "Karaitic consciousness" among the members of the Sephardi community of Amsterdam.

IV

The historical background to the phenomenon of the "Karaites" in Amsterdam in the beginning of the eighteenth century must be sought in different directions. The "Karaites" who were excommunicated in Amsterdam in 1712 were not a direct extension of the critics of the Oral Law who had arisen there in the seventeenth century, and we would search in vain for their ideological roots in the limited literary connections between the isolated members of that community and a few Karaite intellectuals in Lithuania during the time of the Yashar of Candia and Menasseh ben Israel. The "Karaism" of David Mendes Henriques and the brothers Aharon and Isaac Dias da Fonseca drew upon entirely different sources. It was primarily nourished by the growing interest among the various Hebraists of Protestant Europe, beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, in the history of Karaism and the beliefs and opinions of the Karaites of their time.

Karaite works, printed and in manuscript, which were purchased in the orient by various Christian travellers, found their way to libraries and collections in several European countries. Study of Jewish sects in the end of the Second Temple period gave rise to curiosity among Protestant scholars regarding the character of the Jewish sects of their own time, and the existence of a Karaite diaspora in various countries kindled their imagination and aroused high hopes among them⁵⁷. As protestant Christians, whose motto was the unmediated return to biblical sources, they sensed some affiliation with the Karaites. There were even some among them who hoped that a way might be found to their hearts to win them over to the Christian faith with relative ease, for it too, from the first, denied the divine inspiration of the Tamud and was in conflict with the beliefs and opinions of "pharisaic Judaism". Nor, however, did Catholic scholars refrain from studying Karaite works, giving profound attention to the differences between the Karaite sect and rabbinical Judaism⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ See J. Fürst, *Geschichte des Karäerthums*, III (Leipzig, 1869), pp. 46-67. The first Hebraist to give thought to the Karaite question, and who met with Karaites in Istanbul in 1538, was G. Postel, who was a Catholic. See M.L. Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel, Prophet of the Restitution of all Things. His Life and Thought* (Boston, 1981), pp. 95-96; cf. R.H. Popkin, "Les Caraïtes et l'émancipation des Juifs", *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, xiii (1981), 137.

⁵⁸ Karaite manuscripts also reached Paris, and we shall discuss at length R. Simon's attitude towards Karaism.

The English millenarian, John Dury, in a composition written in 1650, attributed a central function in the messianic process to the Karaites, alongside the Protestant Christians⁵⁹. The Dutch Hebraist, Adam Boreel, even suggested, while he was in London in 1655, during the deliberations concerning the return of the Jews, that the Karaites also be given the right to dwell in England, together with the other Jews who would come there⁶⁰. Samuel Hartlib, another extreme millenarian, supported this proposal enthusiastically⁶¹.

The sympathies of this circle of English millenarians were greatly aroused by the positive views of the Karaites taken by Johann S. Rittangel. Rittangel was a professor of oriental languages in Königsberg and had met Karaites in Turkey and Lithuania, even writing a treatise on the Karaites of Lithuania, which undoubtedly came into the hands of the English millenarians⁶². The Karaite Mordecai ben Nissan wrote of him:

As in the year 401 of the sixth millennium [1640-1641] there came to the holy community of Troki a German scholar, whose name was Rittangel, whose soul was drawn by the religion of the Karaites, and he delved deeply into their books and travelled to all the places where the Karaites live, and in his book he praised their faith and books extravagantly in the writings he wrote from community to community⁶³.

A year afterwards, in 1642, Rittangel spent some time in London and

⁵⁹ See John Dury, “An Epistolicall Discours, to Mr Thorowgood, Concerning his Conjecture that the Americans are Descended from the Israelites”, in Th. Thorowgood, *Jewes in America, or Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* (London, 1650), p. c4: “the true Protestants with the one troope, and the true Caraites with the other”; cf. R.H. Popkin, “The Lost Tribes, the Caraites and the English Millenarians”, *Jnl. Jew. Stud.*, xxxvii (1986), 213-222.

⁶⁰ Popkin (*op. cit.* above, n. 59), 222.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Cf. D.S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), p. 216. On 8 January 1656, in a letter to Hartlib, Dury recanted regarding the idea that the Karaites should be brought to England, fearing that it would deter the Jews, the uncompromising enemies of the Karaites, from coming there. See J. Dury, “A Case of Conscience”, in *Harleian Miscellany*, vi (1810), p. 444: “Postscript . . . ‘To call in the Caraites would fright away these, for they are irreconcilable enemies’”.

⁶² On Rittangel and the controversy between those who claimed that he was born Jewish and later converted to Christianity, and those who held that he was born Catholic, converted to Judaism, and then became a Protestant, see: Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, XII (Nouvelle Edition [Réimpression de l’édition de Paris, 1820-1824], Slatkin Reprints, Geneva, 1969), pp. 543ff. “Quelques-uns disent qu’il était né Juif . . . mais d’autres disent que de catholique romain il était devenu Juif, et que de Juif il se fit protestant”. Regarding his studies of Judaism in Constantinople Bayle says: “qu’ayant étudié les humanités, il s’en alla a Constantinople, où il frequenta beaucoup les rabbins pendant douze ans” (*ibid.*, p. 545). Cf. Popkin, “Lost Tribes” (*op. cit.* above, n. 59), 219ff., and see n. 31 on the presence of Rittangel’s study of the Karaites in the Hartlib collection at the University of Sheffield.

⁶³ See Mordecai ben Nissan, *Sefer Dod Mordekhai* (Vienna, 1830), fol. 6a.

met with Comenius and with Dury. The latter was infected with the enthusiasm of the German orientalist regarding the Karaites⁶⁴.

However, the Rittangel affair was merely a harbinger of a growing wave of contacts between Protestant scholars and Karaite sages from Poland and Lithuania. These contacts gave rise to extensive correspondence, even leading to the publishing of detailed treatises about Karaism and the differences between it and "rabbinical Judaism". The subject of the Karaites received great impetus and rose to the consciousness of theologians and Hebraists of the first rank.

The Lutheran monarchs of Sweden took a great interest in the Karaites of Lithuania in the wake of their great involvement in Poland and their presence in the Baltic region. In 1690 Gustav Peringer, a professor at the University of Uppsala, was sent by King Charles IX to visit Poland and gather information about the Karaites and their books and to publish it in a special treatise. On 15 April 1691 he wrote a letter to the famous orientalist Ludolf, the director of the Collegium imperiale historicum in Frankfurt, in which he describes the Karaites he met in Lithuania. That letter, *Epistola de Karaitarum rebus in Lithuania* was published in various collections and aroused quite a stir⁶⁵. In 1696-1697 two other Swedish scholars visited Lithuania. They invited the Karaite Solomon ben Aharon to visit Riga, where he met the learned Johan Puffendorf, rector of the city university⁶⁶. Solomon ben Aharon acceded to Puffendorf's request and composed *Apirion 'aseh lo (Make Him a Canopy)*, "to explain the reason for the division of the house of Israel in two, the Karaites and the Rabbinites, and also to clarify for him the elements of the Karaite religion, its

⁶⁴ See Popkin, "Los Tribes" (*op. cit.* above, n. 59), 219-220. Before his arrival in England he published a Latin translation of *Sefer Yetsirah* in Amsterdam, where, in the same year, he waged a controversy in Hebrew with a Sephardi Jew on the interpretation of the verse, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come" (Gen. 49:10), and that controversy was published in J.Ch. Wagenseil, *Tela Ignea Satanae* (Altdorf, 1681), pp. 328-373 with a Latin translation. See O.S. Rankin, *Jewish Religious Polemic* (Edinburgh, 1956), pp. 89-106, followed by an English translation of the controversy, pp. 107-139.

⁶⁵ Peringer's letter was published in J.J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, I (Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1714), pp. 109-111. On Peringer's voyage and his letter see also J.Ch. Wagenseil, *Hofnung der Erlösung Israelis* (Nürnberg-Altdorf, 1707), pp. 25-26. A German version of the letter was printed by Tenzel: *Monatliche Geschpräche* (1691), p. 47. See also Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, p. 48; H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, X (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 275-276. Cf. Graetz & Schaefer, *Divrei Yemei Yisrael*, VIII (Warsaw, 5659), n. 5: "The Kings of Sweden and the Karaites"; Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, p. 571, n. 29, pp. 680-681. Basnage recounts that Ludolf met a Karaite from Syria in Frankfurt; the Jews of Frankfurt persecuted him, and Ludolf gave him refuge in his home and helped him leave for Poland to meet his Karaite brethren there; Basnage also notes that the Karaite brought a few Karaite texts to Frankfurt with him. See J. Basnage, *L'Histoire et la Religion des Juifs, depuis Jesus-Christ jusqu'à present*, I (Rotterdam, 1707), pp. 475-476.

foundations and its nature, in that he says that the Rabbinites are known in every place throughout the distant lands and seas, while the Karaites are merely mentioned by name in learned books”⁶⁷. When Charles XII invaded Poland at the head of the Swedish army, reaching Lutsk in 1702, “he asked his servants the Karaites in the city of Lutsk to learn about them, from what nation they stem and what is their belief, and what is the difference between the Talmudic Jews and them”⁶⁸. Mordecai ben Nissan acceded to the king’s request and wrote *Levush malkhut*, “a short treatise clarifying the division and the history of the religion and faith of the Karaites”⁶⁹.

In Holland, too, interest in the Karaites and their literature flourished, mainly from the end of the seventeenth century. Without doubt the Warner collection at the University of Leiden, with its thirty Karaite codices

⁶⁶ See *Dod Mordekhai* (*op. cit.* above, n. 63), introduction (pages not numbered): “And now the Lord aroused the spirit of gentile nations to seek after truths within the Torah of the Lord and to see who possesses the truth and what sect of the Jews observes it properly, as two or three years ago two scholars from the kingdom of Sweden on the Dwina River went forth and wandered in the Duchy of Lithuania and everywhere where Karaites dwelled and asked them to sell them the written works of our sages; and it went so far that they asked our congregations to send them from among us two scholars to the place where their college is, to hear from them words of the wisdom of the religion of Karaism in comfort. And the Lord aroused the spirit of the great wise man my brother, a member of my family, and our honored teacher Rabbi Solomon, may the Lord preserve him, son of our honored teacher, Rabbi Aharon the elder from the city of Pasvalys in the region of Zemaitije, young in years and venerable in wisdom, expert in the Latin language and in all branches of learning, who went to them to the city of their kingdom and they honored him and esteemed him and asked him to write in brief about the difference of opinion between the rabbis and the Karaites, and he did as they requested and produced a short comprehensive article on the controversy and sent it to him”. Cf. Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, pp. 48-49; Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, p. 578, n. 36, pp. 680-681.

⁶⁷ The work was published by Neubauer (*op. cit.* above, n. 48), pp. 1-29 (Hebrew section), and see p. 4; see also Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, p. 1444, who discusses an expanded version of the work written by Solomon ben Aharon and completed in 1710; he called the first part *Rehoboam ben Solomon* and the second part *Jeroboam ben Nabat*. Mann quotes a section of the introduction to the first part, from which one may deduce that the work was written at the request of “the well known man, famous for his wisdom in the lands of Germany whose name goes before him in all lands, Mr. Jacob Trigland, the head of the Yeshiva [!] of Holland”, and of “Johann Opfendorf [!] and several others of their age to tell them the reason for the division of the House of Israel into two, the Karaites and the followers of the Mishna”. Solomon ben Aharon was born in Pasvalys in Lithuania and later moved to Vilna. He died in Troki a little before 1745. On this Karaite author see Mann, II, in the index.

⁶⁸ This work was published in Neubauer (*op. cit.* above, n. 48), pp. 30-66, see p. 30; also see Graetz & Schaefer (*op. cit.* above, n. 65), p. 587.

⁶⁹ See Simcha Isaac Lutski, *Ner Tsadikim*, ch. 10, in Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, pp. 1409ff., and see also p. 1436. Mordecai ben Nissan was born in Troki. His grandfather Simcha was the brother of Isaac of Troki; he was killed with his son around 1710, while on a journey from eastern Galicia to the Crimea. Regarding him consult the index in Mann, and below.

(containing seventy-nine Karaite works), was one of the major factors in the awakening of interest among the Hebraists of that country in the beliefs and literature of the Karaites. During his sojourn in Istanbul from 1645 to 1654, Levinus Warner bought the aforementioned works together with scores of oriental manuscripts, including 242 Hebrew treatises. He showed great interest in the Karaite sect, as we see from the notes he wrote in the margins of the Karaite manuscripts in the collection he purchased⁷⁰. Following Warner, Jacob Trigland, a professor of Semitic languages in Leiden, tried to uncover the elements of Karaism and to discern the differences between it and Rabbinic Judaism. In 1698 he sent a letter in Hebrew to the sages of the Karaites in Poland, with four questions about various matters related to Karaism and its literature⁷¹. In it Trigland related his great interest in Jewish literature and the efforts he had invested "in reading ancient books, both printed and hand written, of the Jews, Karaites and Rabbinites alike, that is to say the Talmud, Midrashim, and several commentators"⁷². However, in the very beginning of his letter he revealed his sympathy for the interpretations of the Karaites and his preference for them over those of the Rabbinites: "And behold I have found there disagreement and controversy between you and them in many places. And I have also seen that there is an advantage to your wisdom and interpretations over the rabbinical decrees and over the Talmud and the Kabbalah and Gematria of theirs, like the advantage of light over darkness"⁷³. The scholar from Leiden thus agreed with the other Christian Hebraists of his period, who viewed Karaism as a more enlightened version of Judaism, which had not been infected with the superstitions which they attributed to the Talmud and rabbinical literature.

The sympathetic tone of Trigland's remarks pleased the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania, and Mordecai ben Nissan, who happened to come to Lutsk and examined the questions of the scholar from Leiden, took it upon himself to compose a comprehensive reply, which he called *Sefer Dod Mordekhai*⁷⁴. In 1700, while he was in Zholkva, Mordecai ben

⁷⁰ On Karaite works in this collection see Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, pp. 50ff.; on Warner, his sojourn in Istanbul, and his purchase of books there see G. W. J. Drewes, "The Legatum Warnerianum of Leiden University Library", in *Levinus Warner and his Legacy. Three Centuries Legatum Warnerianum in the Leiden University Library* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 5-18. The collection began to arrive in Leiden in several shipments, via Izmir and Leghorn, three and a half years after Warner's death, i.e., from 1657 on.

⁷¹ On Trigland and his interest in Karaism see Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, pp. 57ff.; Mann (*op. cit.* above, n. 38), II, pp. 588, 680-681, 738.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Trigland's letter reached Poland via his student Jacob Tomson, "whose father is

Nissan saw another letter sent by Trigland to the Karaites of Poland. That letter was written “in the year 5459 in the month of Menahem on the eleventh”, before *Sefer Dod Mordekhai* reached him. In that letter the Karaite sage learned of the efforts of the scholar from Leiden “to ask and inquire with marvelous desire and strong enthusiasm that we copy or sell to the lord the books of the compositions of our sages”⁷⁵. It is not clear whether these contacts between Trigland and the Karaites of Poland had any outcome, or whether indeed Mordecai purchased Karaite writings for the professor from Leiden, and the entire matter remains obscure⁷⁶. However, it is nevertheless evident that Trigland’s interest in the question of the Karaites did not abate, and in 1703 in Delft, Holland, he published a rather comprehensive treatise called *Diatribē de Secta Karaeorum*⁷⁷. This work summed up the information gathered by the Hebraists up to that time about the nature of the Karaite sect in exhaustive detail. Trigland, in contrast to Christian scholars who had previously written about the topic, had read and studied a great many Karaite texts, which were found in his private library and in the Warner collection. After his death, in 1705, his library was sold and the Karaite texts in it were widely dispersed⁷⁸. The manuscript of *Sefer Dod Mordekhai* reached Hamburg, where it was published by Wolf, the bibliographer, in 1714, with a Latin translation, along with Trigland’s aforementioned treatise on the Kara-

a great merchant and of the Canaanites, notables of the land of the kingdom of Poland. He told me that there are some groups and synagogues of Karaites in that kingdom, and he promised me to write to his father and send him this letter to one of the prominent and learned sages”; *ibid.* On the way in which Mordecai received the letter see *ibid.*, below; he sent his composition with a Karaite merchant named Zacharia ben Nissan, who was supposed to give it at the Lvov fair to Leon Parhir, a Dutch resident of Danzig.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* In this letter Trigland wrote: “If we respond to the letters of your lordship then our writings will be given to Rabbi Leib the son of Rabbi Lazarus who lives in the community of Zholkva, the father of Rabbi Aharon, may the Lord preserve him, who lives in the city where your lordship lives”. It would seem that this would refer to Jews of Zholkva who were closely associated with Mordecai ben Nissan; further on in his letter we learn that the brother of this Rabbi Aharon, who had spent time in Leiden, had also visited Zholkva, “and he told me that he was in your lordship’s school and that he saw you in your glory and you gave him great honor and also that you gave him food for his trip while asking him to speak to us regarding a reply to your letters”. Mordecai’s answer to Trigland’s second letter provides unique information about a Polish Jew in Leiden at the end of the seventeenth century and about the visits of others there at that time, even before the Jewish community was founded in the city.

⁷⁶ On the Karaite works in Trigland’s collection see Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁷ The book was published in a single volume, together with writings about Jewish sects in Second Temple times by J. Drusius, N. Serrarius, and J. Scaliger, which had already been printed in the early seventeenth century under the title: *Trium Scriptorum Illustrium de tribus Judaeorum Sectis Syntagma*. On the controversy among these three scholars see Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, pp. 60-61.

⁷⁸ See Fürst, III, pp. 60-61.

ites⁷⁹. In the meantime, in 1705 a Hebraist from Basel, J. L. Frey, published in Amsterdam a selection from *Sefer hamivhar*, Aharon ben Joseph the Karaite's interpretation of the Torah, with a Latin translation, an introduction, and notes⁸⁰.

These flourishing studies of the Karaites and their writings, in which Hebraists in Holland took a central part, gave European intellectuals access to the world of Karaism, increasing their curiosity about their history and beliefs. Naturally, Sephardi Jewish intellectuals, who were in contact with Hebraists and scholars in Holland, were exposed to the Protestant interest in Karaism, which peaked in the first two decades of the eighteenth century.

V

Those Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam who sought support for their objections to rabbinical Judaism in Karaism could peruse the works of the Christian Hebraists and find extracts from various Karaite works, in the original and in translation, which had not previously been available to them. Thanks to the labors of Trigland, Frey, and others, works such as *Sefer hamivhar* by Aharon ben Joseph and *Aderet Eliahu* by Elijah ben Moses Bashyazi⁸¹ were now known (though only in part) not only to Protestant scholars but also to Sephardi Jewish intellectuals⁸². The scep-

⁷⁹ The manuscript came into the possession of the Lutheran priest Winckler, who passed it on to Wolf. Wolf's book is called: *Notitia Karaeorum ex Mardochei Karai recentioris tractatu haurienda, etc.*

⁸⁰ J. L. Frey, *Excerpta nonnula ex Comment. inedito R. Aharonis ben Joseph, Judei Caraitae, cum vers. lat. et not.* (Amsterdam, 1705). Similarly in those years these works were also published: S. Paulinus, *Dissertatio de Behaeresio Judaeorum h. e. de Rabbanitis et karais* (Uppsala, 1691); J. G. Schupart, *Tractatus de secta Karaeorum* (Jena, 1701). Cf. Fürst (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), III, pp. 64ff., who presents a series of additional writings by Christian Hebraists of the first half of the eighteenth century.

⁸¹ Thus, for example, Trigland frequently quoted *Aderet Eliahu*. See Wolf's edition of *Dod Mordekhai* (*op. cit.* above, n. 79), pp. 128, 184, 264-265, 268, 270, 272 and others; cf. above n. 80.

⁸² See J. J. Petuchowski, *The Theology of Haham David Nieto* (New York, 1954), pp. 6-8. Petuchowski attempted to ascertain to what degree there was organized Karaism in England at the time that Nieto wrote his *Math Dan*, and he proposed the hypothesis that certain Karaite writings had found their way to the Jews of England in the early eighteenth century. As proof of his argument he noted that Nieto referred to *Aderet Eliahu* by Elijah Bashyazi: "If it was possible for this type of literature to get into the hands of the opponents of Karaism, is it not reasonable to suppose that it found its way, with no greater difficulty, to say at least, to the friends and sympathizers of this sect?!" Cf. Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim" (*op. cit.* above, n. 12), pp. 293ff. and n. 26, who argues that there were no direct Karaite influences on the heterodox Jews of the Sephardi communities in western Europe. Rosenberg views the use of the term "Karaite" by those who condemned the opponents of the Oral Law as a mere metaphor. Neither Petuchowski nor Rosenberg referred to the writings of the Hebraists or noted that it was a source of infor-

tics among the Spanish and Portuguese community of Amsterdam certainly must have paid particular attention to the Karaite objections to the Oral Law, which were presented in Latin works from the beginning of the eighteenth century; these objections became valuable ammunition for them in their struggle against the Talmud and rabbinical authority. However, it is doubtful whether solely the content of the writings of the aforementioned Hebraists could have drawn members of the Sephardi community of Amsterdam into the Karaite fold. Indeed, though they could make effective use of the Karaite commentaries to destroy the structure of Talmudic *halakha*, it is difficult to imagine that the Karaite way of life, as it appeared in these commentaries, could have attracted them to join the Karaites of their own day and age. An intellectual figure such as Mordecai ben Nissan, as revealed to them in the pages of *Dod Mordekhai*⁸³, could hardly have suited the spiritual demands of the Dutch Sephardi Jews of that generation, whose philosophical education and cultural horizons were far richer than those of the Karaite sage from Troki and his associates.

It would appear that the “Karaites” who were excommunicated in Amsterdam in 1712 were not drawn to authentic Karaism, of which only faint echoes reached them through the Protestant Hebraists, but rather to an ideal picture of Karaism, the chief proponent of which was Richard Simon. More than any other author of that time, this Catholic scholar contributed to spreading the idea that the Karaites were “purified Jews” (“Juifs épurez”)⁸⁴.

Simon was one of the greatest Hebraists of the seventeenth century, laying the foundations of biblical criticism with the publication of his

mation and ideology for the Sephardi Jews of that period. A fascinating example of that can be found in Joseph Lopez, *El Mantenedor*, II, MS in the Ets Haim collection, 48 A 14, p. 304: “por lo que e leydo a años en unos quadernos de uno de tus sequases llamado Aaron Akarahy que por nuestros pecados, para darnos con él en cara, se estampó en Alemaña, en lengua hebrea, y a la margen tradusido en latín”. This writer had then perused the work of Aharon de Karaite, printed in Germany in Hebrew with a Latin translation in the margins (it is not clear if he was referring to the commentary on the Torah by Aharon ben Joseph which was published in Amsterdam or to *Dod Mordekhai*, which was indeed printed in Germany; see above, n. 79). A thorough discussion of the work of Jossoph Lopez, which was written in 1709-1729, is found in Rosenberg (*op. cit.* above, n. 79), pp. 304-307, and see below, in the present article.

⁸³ Although this book was first published only in 1714, in Hamburg (see above, n. 79), it is likely that echoes of it had reached the Sephardi Jews of Holland while the manuscript was still with Trigland in Leiden.

⁸⁴ On his relations with Karaism see M. Yardeni, “La vision des Juifs et du Judaïsme dans l’oeuvre de Richard Simon”, *Rev. Étud. Juives*, cxxix (1970), 94. See especially Popkin, “Les Caraïtes” (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), 138-141, 143-144. He was the first to appreciate the influence of Simon’s writings on the Jews of Amsterdam who wished to free themselves from the influence of the rabbis.

Histoire critique du Vieux Testament in 1678. His views regarding the origins of the Bible, which, in his opinion, was written by several authors at various times, provoked vehement attacks against him on the part of both Catholics and Protestants, bringing his immediate expulsion from the Oratorian Order⁸⁵. However, that did not prevent the publication of four more editions of his book in Holland between 1680 and 1685, and it continued to raise a stir among Christian theologians and scholars of various currents and denominations⁸⁶. Simon became one of the most controversial figures of the *République des Lettres*, and his fidelity to Catholicism, which he retained till the end of his days, did not prevent free-thinkers and dissenters from taking great interest in his rational approach to biblical history⁸⁷. Would it be going too far to assume that in the very community where, twenty-two years prior to the publication of the *Histoire critique*, Benedict Spinoza had been excommunicated, there should be found people with a particular interest in Simon's views, which, in several cases, coincided with the objections of Juan de Prado and also with Spinoza's approach to biblical criticism?⁸⁸

In 1670 Simon had become well known in Jewish circles following the publication of his defence of the Jews of Metz against the blood libel there⁸⁹. Four years afterwards he again raised a stir among them when he published in Paris a French translation of an Italian work by Rabbi Judah Ariele Modena about the history of Jewish customs⁹⁰. By 1710 at

⁸⁵ On this work see H. Margival, *Essai sur Richard Simon et la critique biblique au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1900); on the initial fierce reactions to the book see pp. 89-114; cf. J. Steinmann, *Richard Simon et les origines de l'exégèse biblique* (Paris, 1960), pp. 91-137, 185-207. See also L. Batterel, *Mémoires Domestiques pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Oratoire, IV* (Paris, 1905) (Slatkine Reprints, Geneva, 1971), pp. 247-261.

⁸⁶ See Batterel (*op. cit.*), pp. 256ff.; three editions were published in Amsterdam in 1680; the fifth edition, which is the best, was published in Rotterdam in 1685, and that is the one I used in this article. Cf. Steinmann, *Richard Simon* (*op. cit.*), p. 433. A Latin edition, with a good many mistakes, was published in Amsterdam in 1681, entitled, *Historia Religionis Judaeorum*, with the author noted on the title page as Rabbini Mosen Levi (this is not the only instance in which a book by Simon was published under a pseudonym); the French edition that had been printed in Amsterdam a year before was also called, *Histoire de la Religion des Juifs*, cf. Z. Szajkowski, *Franco Judaica* (New York, 1962), p. 132, no. 1588.

⁸⁷ See Steinmann, *Simon* (*op. cit.*), pp. 54-57, 222-238.

⁸⁸ On Prado's objections see Révah, *Spinoza* (*op. cit.* above, n. 16); Kaplan, *Orobio* (*op. cit.* above, n. 19), pp. 116ff. On Spinoza's biblical criticism see L. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York, 1965), pp. 251ff.

⁸⁹ The book was published that year in two editions, each with a different title: (1) R. Simon, *Juifs de Metz* (Paris, 1670); (2) *idem*, *Factum servant de réponse au livre intitulé: Abrégé du procès fait aux Juifs de Metz* ([n.p.], 1670); see Szajkowski, *Franco Judaica* (*op. cit.* above, n. 86), p. 119, nos. 1419-1420; cf. A. Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York & London, 1968), pp. 40-41. See also Steinman, *Simon* (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 58ff.; Yardeni (*op. cit.* above, n. 84), pp. 183ff.

⁹⁰ See above, n. 28; the French translation is entitled: *Cérémonies et Coustumes qui s'ob-*

least six more editions of this translation were published; one was printed in The Hague in 1682⁹¹. This work was also translated from French into Dutch, with all the additions made by Simon, and it was published in Amsterdam in 1683. In that language as well the work saw a number of editions⁹². Rabbi J.A. Modena had intended his work for a Christian readership, and his main purpose was to refute the anti-Jewish arguments of the elder Buxtorf and other Christian scholars⁹³. However, former *conversos* who had returned to Judaism in Amsterdam and elsewhere could also benefit greatly from this work, which presented the basic concepts of the Jewish religion, its commandments and customs, in a clear and concise manner⁹⁴.

Simon saw fit to add a special appendix about “the sects of the Karaites and Samaritans today” to his French translation, and in his introduction he explained that he did so because “these two sects are little known in Europe, hence it was my duty to speak of them”⁹⁵. This French scholar did not study Karaism and its literature with the same degree of seriousness as Trigland and the other Protestant Hebraists in their works. From Simon’s remarks in his introduction and the appendix itself we deduce that he drew most of his information about the Karaites from Aharon ben Joseph’s commentary on the Torah, “one of the most

servent aujourd’huy parmy les Juifs (Paris, 1674). Simon figures on the title page as “Don Recared Scimeon, Simonville”. On this translation and Simon’s appendices and additions see Steinmann (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 71-76; Batterel (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 243ff.

⁹¹ See Szajkowski (*op. cit.* above, n. 86), p. 132, no. 1587. The second edition, Paris, 1681, had a second part written by Simon and called, *Comparaison des Cérémonies des Juifs et de la discipline de l’Eglise*. This section was then added to all subsequent editions. I have quoted the Hague edition of 1682.

⁹² See *Kerk-Zeeden en de Gewoonten die huiden in gebruik zijn onder de Jooden* (Amsterdam, 1683). Cf. M.R. Cohen, “Leon da Modena’s Riti: a Seventeenth-Century Plea for Social Toleration of Jews”, *Jew. Soc. Stud.*, xxxiv (1972), 316, n. 164. He writes mistakenly that the first Dutch edition was published in 1693. I have seen the Amsterdam editions of 1683, 1700, and 1725. On the English translation see below, n. 154.

⁹³ On the work of Rabbi J.A. Modena, the background, purpose, and content, see Cohen (*op. cit.*), pp. 287-321; on his struggles against anti-Jewish literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Cohen, pp. 292ff.

⁹⁴ Towards the end of the seventeenth century many of the Jews of Amsterdam doubtless read Dutch without difficulty. See D.M. Swetchinski, “The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: Cultural Continuity and Adaptation”, in *Essays in Modern Jewish History. A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, ed. F. Malino & Ph. Cohen Albert (London & Toronto, 1982), pp. 56-60. French readers were also not lacking among them, see *ibid.*, pp. 65ff.

⁹⁵ Simon, *Cérémonies* (*op. cit.* above, n. 91), in the introduction (the pages are unnumbered) writes: “comme ces deux Sectes ne sont pas fort connues en Europe, j’y ay esté obligé d’en parler”. The addition of the appendix on the Karaites and Samaritans is noted on the title page in every edition: “Avec un Supplément touchant les Sectes des Karaites et des Samaritains de notre temps”.

famous sages of that sect", of which he found a manuscript in the library of the Oratorians in Paris⁹⁶. The importance of Simon's appendix does not lie in its erudition but rather in the blunt and clear ideological comments, which leave no doubt about his sympathy for the Karaites, in contrast to his vehement objection to "rabbinical Judaism"⁹⁷.

The origins of Karaism, according to Simon, were in the eighth century, when "more enlightened Jews" "opposed to vain imaginings presented under the deceptive name of traditions of Moses", most of which had no basis whatsoever in the Torah; "the ambition of a number of sages" who wanted their personal teachings to be accepted as the Torah of Moses from Sinai, is what gave rise to them⁹⁸. Simon rejected some of the explanations of Rabbi J.A. Modena about the Karaites, repeatedly emphasizing that one may not learn about them from the works of the rabbis, who opposed them in every respect⁹⁹. In agreement with Aharon ben Joseph the Karaite, Simon condemned the efforts of "the rabbinical Jews" to attribute to "the legends of the Talmud and the imaginings of their ancestors" value equal to that of scripture itself¹⁰⁰. As a Catholic he found it significant and emphasized that the Karaites did not deny the tradition in every case. They were typified by their rationalistic and critical approach, bringing them to reject only "the false and ridiculous traditions"¹⁰¹; they can distinguish between "the certain and fixed traditions and those which were falsified and are doubtful"¹⁰². Regarding Karaite theology, Simon could say that it was not essentially different from that of the other Jews, "except that it is purer and further from superstition, because the Karaites do not place their faith in the Kabbalistic interpretations or in baseless allegories"¹⁰³. They reject the laws of the Mishnah and the Talmud when these are inconsistent with what is written in Scripture, "and when they cannot be deduced [from the Torah] neces-

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ On Simon's attitude to the Jews and Judaism see Yardeni (*op. cit.* above, n. 84), pp. 187ff.; cf. Steinmann, *Simon* (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 59-63.

⁹⁸ Simon, *Cérémonies* (*op. cit.* above, n. 91), pp. 142ff.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143ff.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145: "En quoy il blâme les Rabbanistes, qui font aller de pair les fables du Talmud et les rêveries de leurs Ancêtres avec les Livres sacrez de l'Ecriture".

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 145ff. In regard to the works of Aharon ben Joseph he writes: "Il fait voir aussi que les Caraites ne rejettent pas, comme on dit, toutes sortes de Traditions, mais seulement les fausses et les absurdes, dont il donne quelques exemples a l'entré de son Ouvrage, où il tourne les Rabbanistes en ridicule".

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 146: "Pour faire voir qu'ils reçoivent les traditions raisonnables et bien fondées, il distingue les traditions certaines et constantes de celles qui sont fausses et douteuses".

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

sarily and explicitly”¹⁰⁴. The Karaites do not regard the Bible from the point of view of rabbinical Jews, “who enjoy inventing new laws on every occasion”¹⁰⁵. The Karaites “study Scripture with their intelligence and explicate it from within itself, the latter part from what comes earlier”¹⁰⁶. He sums up the doctrine of the Karaites in a single sentence: “They reject anything that cannot be deduced from within Scripture by reason, or from immutable tradition”¹⁰⁷.

Readers of Simon’s appendix would have been impressed with his account of the Karaites’ opposition to placing mezuzzas on the doors of their houses, to putting on phylacteries, and to the observation of the Jewish dietary laws¹⁰⁸. The Karaite criticism, as formulated by Simon, harmonized in spirit and content with the antinomian trends that had taken hold of several members of the Sephardi community of Amsterdam¹⁰⁹. In Simon’s version of Karaism these people now found support for their arguments against the laws of the Talmud. In the Karaites of their age, hated and persecuted by the rabbis, they could find sympathetic allies in their common struggle against “rabbinical Judaism”.

The subject of Karaism preoccupied Simon in several of his other writings as well. In the first part of his *Histoire critique*, printed, as noted, in Holland in a number of editions in the 1680s, he devotes a whole chapter to the Karaites¹¹⁰. In this composition he already spoke of them unequivocally as “purified Jews” (“Juifs épurez”)¹¹¹, for whom reason is one of the principles of their faith, guiding them both in their understanding of the Bible and in their attitude to the tradition¹¹². Although they mainly agree with each other on their principles, they are not always of a single opinion regarding their practical application, and “the modern Karaites occasionally oppose the ancient ones”¹¹³. The version of Scripture in

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: “Les Caraïtes le consultent avec la raison, et expliquent l’Ecriture par elle-même, ce qui suit par ce qui precede”.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 149ff. See p. 150: “Par ce moyen les Caraïtes s’exemptent d’un tres grand nombre de cérémonies, pour ne pas dire de superstitions, que les Juifs Rabbanistes ont inventées touchant ces mezouzot et ces tephillin”.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Kaplan, “Community” (*op. cit.* above, n. 13), pp. 169-173.

¹¹⁰ See above, n. 86. See also Simon, *Histoire Critique* (*op. cit.* above, n. 86), I, ch. XXIX, pp. 160-165. The Karaites are also mentioned in earlier chapters; see p. 59 and esp. p. 148: “La Secte des Caraïtes . . . rejette toutes les fausees Traditions des Juifs comme des rêveries”.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 163: “Comme les Caraïtes établissent la raison pour un des principes de leur Religion, ils examinent avec application le Texte de l’Ecriture, et ce qu’on appelle Tradition”.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

their possession is identical to that of other Jews, and Aharon ben Joseph the Karaite is faithful to the scriptural tradition like "all the rabbinical grammarians"¹¹⁴. Simon also held that the Karaites knew the language of the Bible better than other Jews, because their literal interpretation augments their understanding of the Hebrew language¹¹⁵.

In several of Simon's selected letters, printed in the early eighteenth century in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, he also discussed the Karaites¹¹⁶. The subject had concerned him from at least 1670 onward, and in his conversation with Jonah Salvador, an Italian Jew who lived with him in Paris for some time, he recalled what he had read about the Karaites in Postel's works¹¹⁷, expressing the main burden of his views of them¹¹⁸. In a letter of 15 June 1683 he reiterated several of his earlier statements about the Karaite criticism of the Talmud, regretting that in the important libraries of Paris he had been unable to find any Karaite work whatsoever, except for the aforementioned work by Aharon ben Joseph¹¹⁹. Simon already knew that Karaite works were to be found in the libraries of Leiden, "which deal with the ceremonies and customs of the Karaites: but I do not believe that their works against the Talmud are to be found there. It would be very important if some of them could be brought from the Levant or Poland"¹²⁰.

Simon's views about the Karaites were not entirely novel to Christian

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 163ff., 355.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹¹⁶ On the various editions of *Lettres choisies de M. Simon* see Batterel (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 283-284. I used the Rotterdam edition, i-iv. 1702-1705.

¹¹⁷ See Simon, *Lettres*, *op. cit.*, iv. 7-12, in a letter to the orientalist Hardy, p. 8, he writes: "Je me souviens d'avoir lû quelque chose de semblable dans les Livres de Postel qui avoit vû dans le Levant quelques Caraïtes, mais jusqu'alors j'avois crû qu'il y avoit de l'exageration dans ce qu'il en rapporte". See above, n. 57. On the Jew Salvador see Steinman, *Simon* (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 58ff.; Yardeni (*op. cit.* above, n. 84), 181ff.; Popkin, "Caraïtes" (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), 138.

¹¹⁸ Simon, *Lettres*, iv. 8: "Ces gens-la ne sont coupables, lui dis-je, que parce qu'ils n'ont point voulu recevoir les rêveries ou traditions ridicules de vos Rabbins, et les fables de votre Talmud". See *ibid.*, p. 9: "Je pris donc le parti des Caraïtes, qui sont des Juifs épurez". See also, *ibid.*, "Les Caraïtes ne rejetoient pas toutes sortes de traditions, mais seulement celles qui leur paroissent n'avoir aucun fondement".

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, i. 85: "Mais il est surprenant qu'il ne se trouve rien de ces Ecrivains Antitalmudistes dans nos meilleures Bibliothèques, non pas même dans celle du Roi, ni dans celle des P.P. de l'Oratoire de Paris, ou il y a un assez grand nombre de livres Juifs soit Mss. soit imprimez. Je n'y ai trouvé aucun Ecrivain Caraïte, si ce n'est cet Aaron sur le Pentateuque, et il n'est même dans le catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Roi, que sous le nom d'Anonyme, ce que J'ai fait remarquer au Bibliotecaire". Prof. J. Hacker, who is studying the formation of Hebrew manuscript collections in France in the seventeenth century, pointed out to me that even in Simon's time, in the large libraries of Paris, including that of the Oratorians, there were other Karaite manuscripts and books beside the commentary on the Torah by Aharon ben Joseph.

¹²⁰ Simon, *Lettres*, *ibid.*; cf. above, n. 70.

scholars, and their roots can be found in Buxtorf himself¹²¹. Dury, too, in the mid-sixteenth century, had described the Karaites as rational people, who are not attracted by any doctrine, but only by what their Scriptures teach, which they deduce by comparing different texts¹²². However, these statements and others like them did not have wide public repercussions, for they were heard only in small circles of Christian Hebraists. In contrast, Simon's statements on the Karaites were widely known, since his books circulated widely within a relatively short period of time. His remarks on the spiritual physiognomy of the Karaites were echoed in other writings even during his lifetime. Jacques Basnage, in his great study of Jewish history, wrote two chapters on the history of the Karaites from their origins to this time, and there is a great similarity between them and some of Simon's words on the subject. “The religion of the Karaites is far more pure than that of the other Jews”, Basnage writes, “for they cling scrupulously to Scripture”¹²³. The exiled Huguenot historian, who disagreed with Simon regarding the Karaites' attitude to the tradition, also made a contribution in consolidating the idealized image of the Karaites in the early eighteenth century: “it seems that the Karaites are less arrogant, for though they do give themselves the title ‘Rav’ [master], they give that title to their enemies as well, and even add the phrase, ‘may he rest in peace’, something which others never practice [towards the Karaites themselves]”¹²⁴.

Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam with reservations about the Talmud or criticism of it could thus find more than just support for their views in such statements. Simon's and Basnage's remarks on Karaism enabled them to develop an independent ideological and ethical identity. In their sympathetic accounts of Karaism they showed not only that the Karaites express a principled disagreement with “rabbinical Judaism” akin to their own, but also that they represented the original, pure Judaism, before it was infected with the superstitions of the Talmud and the *kab-*

¹²¹ See J. Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica, das is Juden-schul* (Basel, 1643), cap. II, p. 132.

¹²² See Dury (*op. cit.* above, n. 59), p. e2v.

¹²³ See Basnage, I (*op. cit.* above, n. 65), chs. 8-9, pp. 433-478; see also p. 439. Simon's translation of Modena's book is presented in full along with *Comparaison des Cérémonies* (*op. cit.* above, n. 91) in vol. I of *Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de tous les Peuples du Monde* (Amsterdam, 1723), with the famous illustrations by Picart, in the section devoted to the Jews, pp. 1-66. That volume contains a third treatise: *Troisième Dissertation sur les Cérémonies des Juifs, pour servir de supplément aux deux dissertations précédentes*, par xxx; see also, *ibid.*, pp. 86-88 on the Karaites: “et sont à cet égard là chez les Juifs ce que les Calvinistes sont chez les Chrétiens ... leur Judaïsme et plus épuré”.

¹²⁴ On the controversy with Simon surrounding the relation of the Karaites to the tradition see Basnage, i. 442ff. He argues, in contrast to Simon, that the Karaites deny the rabbinical tradition completely. See pp. 457, 478, on the virtues and moderation of the Karaites according to Basnage.

balah. Following this line of thought, to be a "Karaites" was to be a "pure Jew". Now those who, like the Karaites, rejected Talmudic law, not only had no need to view themselves as inferior to other Jews, but also they could take pride in their affiliation with a rational Judaism with no falsifications or unnecessary accretions.

However, Simon's attitude had another dimension, which also had far-reaching implications for the "Karaites" who were excommunicated in Amsterdam in the second decade of the eighteenth century, as we shall see below. In the years 1678-1692 Simon corresponded with Frémont d'Ablancourt, an exiled Huguenot friend¹²⁵; the conflicts in their religious outlooks had no adverse effect on the strong friendship between them. An interesting detail is that in all of this correspondence the Protestant Frémont habitually signed his letters as "Le Caraïte", and the Catholic Simon, who addressed him as "Mon cher Caraïte", in all his letters, signed them as "Le Rabbaniste"¹²⁶. Both men agreed that the controversies between Catholics and Protestants could be viewed as a reflection of the relation between "rabbinical Judaism" and Karaism. Just as the Karaites rejected the Talmudic Jewish traditions and wished to return to the original meaning of the scriptural source, so too the Protestants shook free of the interpretations and doctrine of the papal church and sought to return to original Christianity, whose foundations lay in the Hebrew biblical text. Simon, who took the Karaite side in his criticism of Judaism, became "rabbinical" when the time came to fight the battle of Catholicism, in its fidelity to the traditions of the Roman Church against the Protestant attacks upon those traditions. Indeed, in all his statements about the Karaites, Simon did not present their opposition to the Talmud as the outcome of a principled negative attitude towards the tradition as such¹²⁷. The Karaites, in his theory, relate to the tradition with discretion and reason, hence they accept the fixed and immutable traditions, even if they are found in Talmudic and rabbinical literature. However, in his correspondence with Frémont, Protestantism became "Caraïte", with the concurrence of both parties, and Simon, the Catholic, became "rabbinical", despite the sympathy which he showed for Karaism in his various writings. In fact Simon strove to unify Protes-

¹²⁵ After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Frémont d'Ablancourt fled to The Hague, where he served as historiographer to the Prince of Orange. He died there in November 1693. On Frémont see Simon, *Lettres* (*op. cit.* above, n. 116), i, no. 19, pp. 168-191; *ibid.*, no. 30, pp. 250-251; no. 31, pp. 252-264; no. 32, pp. 264-265; ii, no. 21, pp. 113-1119; no. 22, pp. 120-135; no. 23, pp. 136-145; iv, no. 6, pp. 29-35; no. 14, pp. 85-87; no. 17, pp. 102-103; no. 18, pp. 104-109. Cf. Popkin, "Les Caraïtes" (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), 140-141.

¹²⁶ See *Lettres*, *op. cit.*, p. 168, n. 58.

¹²⁷ See above, notes 101-102.

tants and Catholics, and in his letters to Frémont he expressed that desire, arguing frequently that “the distance between the Karaites and true Rabbinism is not as great as you think”¹²⁸. Simon’s and Frémont’s word play is extremely important for our topic. It shows that in certain Christian circles the appellation “Karaite” had become synonymous with Protestant, and, as we shall see below, two of the anti-Talmudic Jews of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam, who defined themselves as “pure Jews” and identified with Karaism, eventually converted and became Protestants. In their consciousness the metaphor became reality, and from “pure Jews” they became “pure Christians”, following the prevalent Calvinist model.

VI

Now let us return to the three excommunicated “Karaites” and see what happened to them. On the fourth of Tammuz 5473 (28 June 1713), nearly a year and a half after the excommunication, David Almanza went up to the pulpit to ask publicly for forgiveness for his actions. He expressed remorse for his “grave deviations and great sins” and announced his willingness to repent “in the way that the lord *Hakham* may impose upon me, with a writ from the members of the *Ma’amad*”¹²⁹. We do not have any data regarding the person of Almanza or his social status: his name does not appear on the list of taxpayers and contributors to the synagogue, neither before his excommunication nor after its cancellation. This indicates the man’s marginality in the community and his lack of involvement in it. Elsewhere I have already noted that from the early seventeenth century, the Sephardi community of Amsterdam contained marginal people, with regard to their Jewish identity, and it could be that David Almanza belongs to that category¹³⁰. His name is absent from the community registers even after the rescinding of the excommunication against him, and he might have left after a while, perhaps even departing

¹²⁸ See Simon, *Lettres*, iv. 105: “Lorsque vous regarderez les choses du bon côté, vous ne trouverez pas une si grande distance que vous vous l’imaginez entre le Caraïsme et le véritable Rabbanisme”. See Steinmann, *Simon* (*op. cit.* above, n. 85), pp. 348-352.

¹²⁹ See *Libro de Ascarnoth*, C, PA 334, no. 21, p. 42: “Termo de se aver levantado o Herem a David Almansa y das palavras que p[or] ordem dos ssres do Mahamad dixo na teba como segue a saber”. Among those who signed that decision was Abraham Franco Mendes, the father of the author David Franco Mendes, who was serving as the warden of the congregation. This decision to rescind the excommunication was also written in the margins of the writ of excommunication against the three “Karaites”, see: *Ascarnoth*, B (*op. cit.* above, n. 14), p. 572: “5473 em [] de tamus se levantou O Herem a David Almansa e se lhe deo a penitensia que o sr H.H. e beddin achou apesado e subiu a teba”.

¹³⁰ Kaplan, “Community” (*op. cit.* above, n. 13), pp. 169-173.

from the city of Amsterdam. This would not be the first instance in this community in which someone who was punished for a transgression then cut himself from the congregation, in particular after repenting for his misdeed and asking forgiveness for his sins¹³¹.

What about the brothers Aharon and Isaac Dias da Fonseca? On Sunday, the fifth of Elul, 5473 (27 August 1713), the *Ma'amad* declared from the pulpit of the synagogue that it was permitted to speak to the two of them¹³². That strange decision is surprising: if it was permitted to speak with them, then they were no longer viewed as excommunicated. Why then did the *Ma'amad* not specifically declare an end to their excommunication?

The answer to that mystery lies in an event which took place two days beforehand in the Westerkerk, one of the principal Reformed (Calvinist) churches in Amsterdam: on Friday, 25 August, "Aharon and Isaac da Fonseca, two brothers who came to us from Judaism" were baptized¹³³. The decision to perform that ceremony was made at a meeting of the Reformed church council in Amsterdam on the seventeenth of that month. A minister named Sibersma, who had already been involved with their request to be accepted by the Reformed Church for some time presided over that meeting. The two brothers were examined regarding their motives in converting, their responses satisfied those present, and eight days afterwards they were baptized¹³⁴.

The rumor of their conversion spread rapidly through the Spanish and Portuguese community, and when the members of the *Ma'amad* convened on Sunday for their regular weekly meeting, they decided to discuss the incident with no delay. They were afraid that Aharon and Isaac might complain to the municipal authorities and the institutions of the church that the members of their former community continued to ostracize them, although they had ceased to be Jews and had become Christians, and that this refusal to deal with them infringed upon their ability

¹³¹ See Y. Kaplan, "The Travels of Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam to the 'Lands of Idolatry' (1644-1724)", in *Jews and Conversos*, ed. Y. Kaplan (Jerusalem, 1985), p. 207.

¹³² This decision was written in the margins of the writ of excommunication, see *Ascarnoth*, B (*op. cit.* above, n. 14), p. 572: "em 5 de Elul 5473 se fez licito falar com Aharon e Is[hack] Dias da Fonseca, pregonado da teba, como gabay da sedaca Franco Mendes".

¹³³ See the archive of the Reformed community in Amsterdam (Hervormde Gemeente Amsterdam), deposited in the Municipal Archives there, PA 376, no. 18, p. 212, and see also no. 109, p. 189; on the relations between the Reformed Church in Amsterdam and the Jews of that city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see: I.H. v[an] E[eghen], "De Gereformeerde Kerkeraad en de Joden te Amsterdam", *Amstelodamum*, xlvii (1960), 169-174.

¹³⁴ PA 376, *ibid.*, p. 211; I am grateful to Ms. O. Vlessing of the Municipal Archives in Amsterdam for her assistance in locating this document.

to make a living¹³⁵. Now that the two “Karaites” brothers had converted, the ban against them had lost all religious and social meaning. Hence the *Parnasim*, knowing that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, decided to prevent any difficulties with the Reformed Church of Amsterdam and permitted conversation with the two brothers.

Thus ends the story of the Dias da Fonseca brothers, who passed from being “Karaites”, i.e., “pure Jews”, in Simon’s words, to being Calvinist Christians, i.e., “Karaites”, according to the metaphorical sense given to that term by Frémont d’Ablancourt and other Huguenots in Holland¹³⁶.

Aharon and Isaac Dias da Fonseca are also not mentioned in the community registers before their conversion, and apparently they too tended to keep a distance from involvement in community life. Aharon was twenty-nine years old when he converted¹³⁷ (Isaac is always mentioned after him, probably indicating that he was younger), and he lived in Rozengracht in the Jordaan neighborhood, where quite a few Huguenot exiles had settled¹³⁸. Hence it is no wonder that he married a woman who, judging by her family name, was doubtless of French Calvinist stock: on 3 March 1715 he married Anna Legrand in the Walloon Church in Amsterdam¹³⁹. Their daughter, Anna Maria, who was born at the end of that year, was baptized in the Oude Zijds Kapel on 5 January 1716¹⁴⁰. After being left a widower, in 1730 Aharon married Anna Koetsch¹⁴¹. Like his brother, Isaac was also married soon after his conversion, to a Dutch woman named Johanna Elisabeth Haamstede, and they had six children¹⁴². After the death of his first wife he married a widow, Adriana

¹³⁵ On the intervention of the municipal authorities of the city in the decisions of the *Ma’amad* regarding excommunication, see: Kaplan, “Herem” (*op. cit.* above, n. 10), pp. 145ff.

¹³⁶ See above, nn. 125-126.

¹³⁷ See the list of marriages in the city of Amsterdam for 15 February 1715, in the Municipal Archives, DTB no. 551, p. 143: at that time he was thirty-one years old.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*: “Acte verleent den 3 maart 1715 om alhier in de Walenkerk te trouwen”. The bride’s father’s name was Albertus Legrand; on her mother’s side Anna was of Dutch Reformed stock, the Seeling or Zeelang family, see *ibid.*, no. 63, p. 91.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 441, p. 143.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 571, p. 238; at that time he had already moved to Prinsengracht, where his brother Isaac lived.

¹⁴² I could not locate the registration of this marriage in the Municipal Archives, and it could be that they married elsewhere. These are the names of their children and the dates of their baptism: (1) Katharina, 26 May 1715; (2) George, 5 August 1716 (died 12 June 1717); (3) Maria, 5 September 1717; (4) Johanna Elisabeth, 3 February 1719; (5) George, 4 August 1720 (died on 27 August 1720); (6) another child died on 1 June 1722, apparently before being baptized. See DTB, no. 109, p. 224; no. 48, p. 215; no. 109, p. 273; *ibid.*, p. 305; no. 123, p. 72 v.; no. 1103, pp. 34, 45, 50.

van den Burgh¹⁴³, and from that marriage he had four more children¹⁴⁴. The connections between the two brothers were maintained at least until 1730¹⁴⁵, and everything would seem to indicate that they assimilated into the Reformed community of Amsterdam with no particular difficulties.

Should we regard the affair of the excommunication of these three "Karaites" as marginal and exceptional, involving only those three members of the community, or was it rather the tip of an iceberg, indicating an extensive social and ideological phenomenon that comprised other Spanish and Portuguese Jews?

In 1828 the French priest Henri Grégoire wrote the following:

Close to a hundred years ago fifty Jewish families in Amsterdam wished to declare themselves Karaites, but the authorities opposed this; and for that reason some of these families were baptized into Christianity¹⁴⁶.

Grégoire did not reveal the source of his information, and it could be that he exaggerated the number of "Karaite" families. In any case, my careful examination of the lists of baptisms in the churches of Amsterdam from 1712 to 1715 produced no evidence that other Sephardi Jews converted to Christianity at that time. But the fact that echoes of that affair reached him after such a long time strengthens one's feelings that this was a public phenomenon that included more than three isolated Jews.

Various responses within the community also confirm that "Karaism" occupied a prominent place in the intellectual ferment that affected the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community in the early eighteenth century. Joseph Lopez, in three weighty tomes against the six principal enemies of the believing Jew, found it necessary to include the "Karaite" among them, "who denies the interpretations of the sages and the divine tradition", along with atheists, Epicureans, deists, Calvinists, and Catholics¹⁴⁷. Other compositions written by rabbis and various authors

¹⁴³ She had been married to Pedro Parera, a Portuguese from Antwerp; in 1710; see *ibid.*, no. 546, p. 116. It is not clear when she became a widow.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 560, p. 471. These are the names of their children and the dates of their baptism: (1) Johanna Henrietta, 16 March 1724 (died 27 April 1724); (2) Abraham, 3 October 1725; (3) Esther, 3 September 1724; (4) Isaac, 5 February 1730; see *ibid.*, no. 123, p. 122 v.; no. 81, p. 30 v.; no. 101, p. 76; no. 20, p. 102 v.; no. 1103, p. 55.

¹⁴⁵ Aharon was a witness at the baptism of Isaac, the son of his brother Isaac, on 5 February 1730 in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam; see *ibid.*, no. 20, p. 102 v.

¹⁴⁶ See: H. Grégoire, *Histoire des sectes religieuses*, III (Paris, 1828), p. 308. Cf. Popkin, "Les Caraïtes" (*op. cit.* above, n. 57), 143ff. Without knowing about the excommunication of 1712 he pointed to the connection between the "Karaites" in Grégoire's story and the image of the Karaites in Simon's writings.

¹⁴⁷ See Lopez, *Mantenedor* (*op. cit.* above, n. 82), I, Ets Haim MS 48 A 13, the introduction (pages not numbered); II, 48 A 14, pp. 265-352. Lopez began writing the part about the Karaites on 10 Kislev 5480. Cf. Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim" (*op. cit.* above, n. 12), p. 304, who mistakenly states that Lopez completed that part on that date.

among the Sephardis of Amsterdam in that generation are also full of attacks against those

who do not accept the yoke of the sovereignty of rabbinical authority, saying “we accept nothing but what is written in the Torah written by the finger of God”, adding transgressions to their sins, for they do not even accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to heed the words of the sages¹⁴⁸.

The leaders of the Sephardi community in Amsterdam were not the only ones alarmed by the phenomenon of “Karaism” manifest at that time. *Sefer mateh Dan*, by Hakham David Nieto, published in London in 1714, in both Hebrew and Spanish, is the best argued and most detailed defence of the Oral Law published among the Sephardi Jews in western Europe after the *Nomologia* of Immanuel Aboab. Nieto’s book is fired with polemical ardor “against the Karaites who refuse and deny the tradition of the sages of blessed memory”¹⁴⁹. In his book Nieto treats the heresy of the Karaites as a real and actual threat, and in the words he places in the mouth of the Kuzari king there is more than a hint of his own feelings regarding the Sephardi community of London: “And my grief is rendered more painful when I see the sages of my country go dumb before [the Karaites] like a ewe before those who fleece her, because they are incapable of resisting them with the reins and bit of responses”¹⁵⁰. Nieto spoke through the mouth of the “friend”, who complained:

For there is not one of our latter sages who proves the main point, on which everything depends, i.e., that the interpretation of the Torah and the commandments by our rabbis of blessed memory, is the Oral Law which Moses received from Sinai, and the reason for that is that the whole nation of the children of Israel were firm in belief in the rabbis, inherited from their fathers in generation after generation, believers and children of believers. Therefore they did not consider discussing *how to respond to Karaites who speak vainly against the rabbis of blessed memory. Hence the rebels and those who profane the tradition have multiplied in these days and at the present time.* [Our italics]¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁸ See B.R. Dias Brandon, *Sefer ‘Emek Benyamin* (Amsterdam, 5513): printed after his work, *Orot hamitsvot*, fol. 21b. Cf. Rosenberg, “Emunat Hakhamim” (*op. cit.* above), p. 289. This literature also includes the work of Eliahu Monteyro, *Emunat Hakhamim*, written mainly in Portuguese, see Ets Haim MSS 48 D 44, the introduction (first page, not numbered): “Esta pia obra veijn a defender a divina Ley mental he tirarles as cattaratas aos incredulos os quais imtheijramento não dam credito em ella mostrarles que esta Ley mental a emsinou Deus mesmo a nosso mestre Mosseh no monte de Synay”.

¹⁴⁹ On this work see Petuchowski, *Nieto* (*op. cit.* above, n. 82), pp. 18ff. See D. Nieto, *Mateh Dan, part II* (London, 5474), fol. 2a.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 5a.

It is highly instructive that the dedication at the beginning of the book, to the *Parnasim* and officers of the *Sha'ar hashamayim* congregation, was written by Nieto on the first of Second Adar, 5472, just a few days after the excommunication of the "Karaites" in Amsterdam. Even if Nieto did not himself know about the excommunication, it could well be that he had heard rumors of the ferment in the *Talmud Torah* congregation in Amsterdam and the shocks caused there in response to the rumors circulated by "Luzitano" in his letters¹⁵². The milieu of the Sephardi Jews of London was similar to that of their brethren in Amsterdam and other centers of the Sephardi diaspora in western Europe. In England, too, former *conversos* and their descendants who expressed opposition to talmudic law could find encouragement for their views in the idealized picture of the Karaites current as early as the mid-sixteenth century, at the time of the discussions of the return of the Jews¹⁵³. Indeed, in 1707 an English translation of Rabbi J.A. Modena's history of Jewish customs was published in London, including the appendix by R. Simon on the Samaritans and Karaites!¹⁵⁴

Thus we find that the idealized picture of the Karaites which was common among both the Christian and Jewish intellectuals of Europe towards the end of the seventeenth century found particular acceptance among certain Sephardi Jews, who wanted to free themselves of the yoke of traditional Judaism and form a new kind of Judaism in keeping with their spiritual desires. They found in the conception of Karaism advanced by Simon and others an ideology consistent with their strong desire to create a "purified" Judaism, not dominated by Talmudic law, which would assist their social and cultural integration into the surrounding society. However, they were unable to forge a new Jewish identity. Not only did they fail to establish leadership worthy of its name, but also the ideological foundation upon which they sought to build was essentially too shaky and weak. The crumbling elements within it outnumbered and outweighed the firm and solid ones. Ultimately these "Karaites" detached themselves entirely from Judaism and assimilated into Christian society; and the waves of conversion which swept over Sephardi Jewry

¹⁵² See above, pp. 197ff.

¹⁵³ See n. 49 above.

¹⁵⁴ See *The History of the Present Jews throughout the World. Being an Ample tho Succinct Account of their Customes, Ceremonies, and Maner of Living at this Time*, Translated from the Italian, written by Leo Modena, a Venetian Rabbi, by Simon Ocle (London, 1707). See pp. 241-260 for the appendix on the Karaites by Simon. An earlier English translation of Modena's work was made in London in 1650, even before the French translation by Simon; cf. Cohen, "Modena" (*op. cit.* above, n. 92), 316, n. 162.

in western Europe during the eighteenth century are an extension of this unsuccessful endeavor.

APPENDIX

The text of the Herem against the “Karaites” in Amsterdam in 1712, taken from *Libro de Ascemoth* B (see note 14, above). I have not corrected the spelling of the original version, although I have substituted “v” for “u” in the appropriate places and added the necessary punctuation.

Termo de se aver posto em Herem a David Mendez Henriq[ue]s alias David Almansa, Aron e Ishack Dias da Fonseca e se leo na teba o seguinte.

(em[]adar Rison). Ha vindo a notisia dos s[enho]res do mahamad que David Mendez Henriques, alias David Almansa, Aron e Ishack Dias da Fonseca, siguem a secta dos Karraim, obrando como tais, e negando inteiram[en]te a tradição da ley mental, que he o basis e fundam[en]to de nossa s[an]ta ley. E avendo procurado d[it]os s[enho]res do mahamad, em comp[anhi]a do S[enho]r H[aham], disuadilos de seu mau caminho e reduzilos ao da verdade, não foy posivel por averem ficado pertinazes presistindo em suas opinioims prejudisiais e ereticas. E assi, tanto por a obrigação que nos ocorre de escombrar o mal de entre nos, como p[ar]a prevenir que este mal tão contajozo (sic) não infecte, nein se extenda contaminando a outros, resolverão os S[enho]res do mahamad uniformes, com pareser do S[enho]r H[aham], publicar aos d[it]os 3 sujeitos asima nomeados em Herem e apartalos da nação, como com effeito os publicação na forma seguinte, com as portas do Hehal abertas p[ar]a pedir vingança ao todo poderoso contra elles, como sectarios e perturbadores do sosego comun:

Com sentensa dos anjos, com ditto dos Santos nos enhermamos, apartamos, amaldisoamos e praguejamos a David Mendez Henriques, alias David Almansa, Aron e Ishack Dias da Fonseca, com consentim[en]to del Dio Benditto e consentimento de todo este K[ahal] K[ados], diante dos santos sepharim, com os 613 perseitos que estão escritos nelles, como (sic) o Herem que enhermou Jeosua a Jericho, com a maldição que maldixe Elissah aos mossos e com todas as as (sic) maldissoims que estão escritas na ley, malditos sejam de dia, malditos sejam de noute, malditos sejam em seu deitar, e malditos sejam em seu levantar, malditos elles em seu sahir, malditos elles em seu entrar. Não querera Deus perdoar a elles, que entonces fumeara furor de A[donai] e seu zello nelles, e jazerão nelles todas as maldiçoims escritas no libro desta ley. E arrematara A[donai] a seus nomes de debaixo do ceos, e apartarlosa A[donai] p[ar]a mal, de todos os tribus de Israel, com todas as maldissoims do firmamento escritas na ley esta. E vos os apegados com A[donai] vosso Deus, vivos todos vos oje. Advertindo que de oje por diante ninguem lhe pode falar bocalm[en]te nem por escrito, nem darlles favor direita ou indireitam[en]te, nem leer papel algum feito ou

escrito por elles, e som[en]te se premite a seu pay e jrmãos lhes possão falar,
e A[donai] por sua misricordia asista a seu povo e aparte o mal de entre nos e
nos bendiga com paz amen.

Abra[ha]m Bueno Henriquez
Mosseh de Pinedo
Jacob Aboab Osorio

David Jsirun (sic) de Acuña
Ishac Levy Ximenez
Moises Mendez da Costa
Moseh de Joseph Mocatta

THE HUTCHINSONIANS AND HEBRAIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

DAVID S. KATZ

"For reasons that I do not understand", confessed Richard Popkin, "philosophers seem to need to construct their picture of what they are doing in terms of a historical story that runs from Descartes to Hume and Kant". In doing so, Popkin argues, they fail to recognize that we need "to delve into their context, and not just ours"¹. Nowhere is this refusal to recognize the importance of those who latched onto the "wrong" answers more evident than in the historiographical neglect suffered by the eighteenth-century English Hutchinsonians, in spite of the fact that in their day they ruled the roost at Oxford, and later in Scotland and in many parts of New England². Most importantly, in their understanding of the literal validity of the Old Testament, the Hutchinsonians provided the link between the millenarianism of the seventeenth century, and the beginnings of Fundamentalism in the nineteenth³.

I

John Hutchinson (1674-1737) was born in Yorkshire and trained to be a land steward. At the age of about twenty he was given this position in the household of the duke of Somerset, and while managing a law suit for his employer in 1700 chanced to make the acquaintance of John Woodward, physician to the duke. Woodward would soon become

¹ R.H. Popkin, "The Religious Background of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy", *Jnl. Hist. Phil.*, xxv (1987), 47.

² Most of the secondary work on the Hutchinsonians is concerned with their scientific (and especially geological) views: see H. Metzger, *Attraction Universelle et Religion Naturelle* (Paris, 1938), pp. 8, 197; A.J. Kuhn, "Glory or Gravity: Hutchinson Vs. Newton", *Jnl. Hist. Ideas*, xxii (1961), 303-322; M. Neve & R. Porter, "Alexander Catcott: Glory and Geology", *Brit. Jnl. Hist. Sci.*, x (1977), 37-60; G.N. Cantor, "Revelation and the Cyclical Cosmos of John Hutchinson", in *Images of the Earth*, ed. L.J. Jordanova & R. Porter (Chalfont St. Giles, 1979), pp. 3-22; C.B. Wilde, "Hutchinsonianism, Natural Philosophy and Religious Controversy in Eighteenth Century Britain", *Hist. Sci.*, xviii (1980), 1-24; M.C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment* (London, 1981), p. 96; C.B. Wilde, "Matter and Spirit as Natural Symbols in Eighteenth-Century British Natural Philosophy", *Brit. Jnl. Hist. Sci.*, xv (1982), 99-131.

³ See generally, D.S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1988).

known for his attempt to reconcile the Old Testament with geological evidence, and in that capacity he employed Hutchinson to collect fossils during his travels between the duke's various estates. Woodward had already published his natural history of the earth before he had met Hutchinson, and clearly regarded the steward as a sort of research assistant, a role which Hutchinson was pleased to perform. At some point, Hutchinson discovered that Woodward had been deceiving him consistently about the progress that he had made in using the fossils to verify the Mosaic account of Creation, and that the notebook which supposedly contained a draft of the learned study was in fact nearly empty. Hutchinson thereupon determined to complete the work himself, and applied to the duke of Somerset for permission to quit his service. When he explained his reasons, the duke instead generously gave Hutchinson a sinecure, a house, and the leisure to proceed with his research undisturbed. Robert Spearman, Hutchinson's follower and biographer, claims that "he gave himself up entirely to a studious and sedentary life, which being so opposite to his former way of doing, by degrees weakened and broke his constitution, and at length laid the foundation of that disorder which carried him off". The duke also gave Hutchinson the right to present to one of his Sussex livings, and so the Mosaic geologist was able to place the Rev. Julius Bate, who with Spearman would edit his collected works and promote Hutchinsonianism after the founder's death⁴.

The labors of Spearman and Bate were essential, as Hutchinson's literary style was nearly impenetrable, and only cleared when he was launched into one of his immoderate attacks, usually against Isaac Newton. "Let those who complain of the obscurity of Mr. *Hutchinson's* stile consider", explained his editors, "that he was writing no romance, nor fairy tale . . . His work was to clear the way, and to lay in materials for such as should have more leisure to play the orator". That being said, they admitted, "'Tis true, there are likewise long periods, longer sentences, and more parentheses than one who reads to divert himself would chuse; yet whoever peruses him with care, will find his trouble well bestow'd, and abundantly repaid". The Hutchinsonian scheme in its most active form was an amalgam of the original works of John Hutchinson and the reworded abstract of Spearman and Bate. In essentials, all three men were in perfect agreement, but without the reinterpreted text, Hutchinson's views would have remained hidden in obscurity⁵.

⁴ Robert Spearman, *A Supplement to the Works of John Hutchinson* (London, 1765), pp. i-v.

⁵ [Robert Spearman], *An Abstract from the Works of John Hutchinson* (2nd edn, London, 1755), p. 4.

The starting point for the elaboration of the Hutchinsonian system was their faith in the Old Testament as the continuing revelation of God, and in the Hebrew language as the medium of its expression. "In order to take a nearer view of the *Mosaic* philosophy", wrote Spearman of the Bible, "the original text must be consulted, simply as it stands, divested of those points or pricks for vowels which the modern *Jews* contrived". The Old Testament was the sacred word of God, but in its original form it was written about vowels, and so continues to appear on all scrolls of the Pentateuch today. Hutchinson knew that the vowels, which appear as points or lines above and below the string of consonants, were invented by a group of Jews who became known as the Masorites, who examined closely the text of Scripture at Tiberias in Palestine as much as five hundred years after Christ. "The reader will be pleased to observe", Spearman explained, "that these points are a heap of almost imperceptible dots, placed under the *Hebrew* letters, to give the same word different sounds, and, by virtue thereof, a variety of different, nay opposite significations, whereby the whole language is render'd vague and uncertain". These misleading vowel signs were invented only after the New Testament was written, once the Jews realized that the prophecies of the Old had been fulfilled: "after that, they turn'd masorites, rabbies, expounders, scribes, &c. patched up *talmuds*, *mishnas*, *cabbalas*, &c." ⁶.

So the Old Testament was certainly a guide book to God's divine plan, but it could only be understood by reducing the text to its original lines of consonants and then deciphering them according to a method untainted by the machinations of the Jews. Hutchinson's system was ingenious. As Spearman and Bate put it, the "principal thing the learner has to attend to, is, the proper meaning of the several roots, which he may obtain by comparison" ⁷. All students of Hebrew soon learn that the language is constructed around (mostly) three-letter roots, which are channelled into various paradigms by the addition of certain other letters, to produce the full vocabulary of the Bible, or indeed of modern spoken Hebrew. Thus, the three-letter root for "open", פתח, by prefixing the of the letter נ, becomes the word for "key", as such a prefix usually denotes an instrument which will realize the promise of the verb. We now recognize that many words can only peripherally be connected to the root, or to each other: the various permutations of the root אמנ, which gives us the English "amen", is a well-known example of this connundrum ⁸. For Hutchinson, however, these sorts of puzzles provided the very key to-

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 205-206.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁸ See R. Needham, *Belief, Language, and Experience* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 44-50.

wards understanding God's sacred plan and the secrets of the universe. Grammar and the history of linguistic development were angrily thrust aside, as Hutchinson and his followers argued that this, like all features of the Old Testament, had been planned by God himself. All of the permutations of the single Hebrew root were related and virtually interchangeable, as were all words with single consonantal spellings. This, in English, would be to argue that the words "bed", "bad", "bode", and "bud" were synonymous. The construction of such a complex biblical text was well within the abilities of the Deity; its deconstruction was mankind's only path towards divining the secrets of the universe.

John Hutchinson himself gave numerous examples of how his theory might be implemented, and of the dramatic consequences of its application. The word in Hebrew for the firmament described in Genesis is רקיע ("rakia"). Hutchinson's Hebrew lexicons revealed that in other contexts the root רקע ("rka") "signifies an opening, or dividing asunder, a drawing, or stretching out, according as where it is found, and what it is understood of – to expand, extend, distend, stretch". Kircher's concordance confirmed that the word implied "an Extension, Expansion, compact, and firm". On this basis, Hutchinson was able to discover that the firmament consisted originally of air and water, and was like "a Plate of ductile Metal hammer'd, of Wings expanded, or such Things, is extending one Edge one Way, and the other the other Way". To those who would object to the conclusions he drew from the extrapolation of a single root, Hutchinson explained that we "can have no Word in modern Language for it, because we have no Idea of it". The conjunction of such ideas seemed strange only in English; in Hebrew it was the essence of clarity⁹.

So too did Hutchinson argue for the identity of the two Hebrew consonants שם, which can be read either as "a name" or "a place", or in the plural, "the heavens" (שמים). As Hutchinson explained, in his inimitable prose, he believed, "the Thing, to be the same as Place . . . Place and Things are the same; and tho שם be a General Name for Place, and Heaven be the Matter or Place which includes all"¹⁰. But of course his most famous etymological demonstration was the emphasis on the common root of the words "glory" and "heavy", so that gravity could be seen as the product of the glory of God. "Glory does not appear to be a Root, or have a separate Idea"; Hutchinson surmised, "but to imply

⁹ John Hutchinson, *Moses's Principia. Part II*, in *The Philosophical and Theological Works*, ed. Robert Spearman & Julius Bate (London, 1749), ii. 264-265: first pub. 1727. The lexicons referred to are those of Marius of Calasio (1621) and Athenasius Kircher (1607).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ii. 79.

that the Root of Weight is applied to beneficial Purpose, or to valuable Actions, or Things, so Glory”¹¹. The ingenious application of unpointed and therefore unvocalized Hebrew enabled Hutchinson in his own mind and those of his followers to disregard Newton and to reject his principles, especially those which postulated gravitation as a non-mechanistic, and therefore almost occult force. The problem was that Newton’s knowledge of Hebrew was inadequate to understand the Old Testament in its original and therefore divine form. “One would think”, Hutchinson’s editors argued, “that such an one, born in a *Christian* country, who had access to examine books dictated by the Supreme Author of this system, would first have qualified himself to read and understand them, before he had dared to reject revelation, to set up a scheme in direct opposition thereto, stolen from the worst and blindest of the heathens”. Newton’s experiments were misconceived from the start, and it was ludicrous to claim that “some children’s gewgaws, a three corner’d piece of glass, a hole in a window, the pendulum of a clock . . . may, it seems, become the foundation of mighty discoveries”. These, in Hutchinson’s view, “shew no more than a few very singular properties of the *names*”, the last word being, of course, interchangeable with “the heavens”¹².

II

As might have been expected, the scriptural interpretation of Hutchinson and his followers did not go unchallenged, especially among those biblical scholars whose knowledge of Hebrew was somewhat more systematic and profound. Chief among these in England was Benjamin Kennicott (1718-1783), fellow of Exeter College, Oxford from 1747, Radcliffe librarian from 1767, a pupil of Thomas Hunt, the Regius professor of Hebrew. Kennicott’s life work was the collating of existing manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible in an attempt to eliminate errors which had been introduced over the centuries, while still acknowledging the divine inspiration of Scripture itself. The problem, Kennicott argued, was that “what was thus inspir’d by God, was committed to the Care of Men; and we must acknowledge, that *we have had this Treasure in Earthen Vessels*”. Kennicott was well aware of the opposition to his work which had shown itself in Oxford and elsewhere, a reception far different from that which met Richard Bentley when he worked on the collation of New Testament manuscripts some decades before. “If this were not a known case”, he complained, “it would seem strange – that Men, pretending to an Ac-

¹¹ John Hutchinson, *Glory or Gravity*, in *Works*, vi. 7: first pub. 1733-1734.

¹² [Spearman], *Abstract*, pp. 148-149.

quaintance with Languages, should allow Mistakes to have been introduced in transcribing the New Testament, and not allow the same as to the Old'', especially when we consider the fact that some parts of this book were written as much as 1500 years before the Gospels. Indeed, Kennicott argued,

To suppose such an absolute Freedom from Error in the Transcribers of these Books, the most ancient in the whole World – what is it else, but to suppose *a constant Miracle wrought in favour of every such Transcriber*, and the Divine Assistance communicated in the Formation of every Letter? – And this Infallibility continued down to these times; as there seems no particular *Æra* assignable for its Termination: at least, it seems to have been as necessary 'till the Invention of Printing, as it could have been before.

Such a claim, Kennicott maintained, was not consistent with a rational and unprejudiced examination of the problem¹³.

Kennicott described the shock he received when he went over to the Bodleian Library to put to the test his theory of the imperfect Old Testament text. Kennicott sought out the manuscript copies of the Old Testament there, 'without expecting any great matters from them; having frequently been assur'd by considerable Writers – that the Jews (the *later* Jews, at least) had transcrib'd their sacred Books so carefully, and with a superstitious Exactness number'd every Sentence and Word and Letter, that no material Differences could be found in any of the MS copies now extant''. Instead, Kennicott found ample evidence of the vagaries of textual transmission, for although the manuscripts, 'in general, were writ with great Care; but yet, the very best and most accurate of them wore the Marks of human Imperfection''. Kennicott thereupon resolved to collect and collate the various readings, in order to reproduce as close as possible the original Hebrew text, 'to separate the *pure Gold* from the Dross and Defilement, which it has contracted by Time and Accidents''¹⁴.

Even Kennicott's supporters probably shared the view of Dr. Johnson, that 'though the text should not be much mended thereby, yet it was no small advantage to know, that we had as good a text as the most consummate industry and diligence could procure''¹⁵. But the Hutchinsonians opposed him tooth and nail, not only because he canonized with scholar-

¹³ Benjamin Kennicott, *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Considered* (Oxford, 1753), i. 7-9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 261-262, 556. Cf. *idem*, *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Considered. Dissertation the Second*. (Oxford, 1759), pp. vi-vii, from dedication to Thomas Hunt.

¹⁵ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R.W. Chapman (Oxford, 1980), p. 444: this remark was made in 1770.

ship the hated vowel points, but because he tampered with the accepted consonantal skeleton of the Hebrew Bible itself. The version which the Hutchinsonians had subjected to their intense scrutiny was shown to be nothing more than the Hebrew Bible printed at Venice in 1524-1525 from a late medieval manuscript. Kennicott sought to get behind this late text, not only by using Syriac and early Latin versions, but also the Septuagint and even the Samaritan Pentateuch, written in Hebrew and containing variant readings and alterations. Kennicott's parallel texts effectively undermined the biblical literalism of the Hutchinsonians and all those who were determined to adopt a highly complex approach to the Old Testament. His grammatical knowledge, used with great effectiveness against the Hutchinsonians in Oxford itself, supported this major blow against the school¹⁶.

Ironically, in many respects the method used by John Hutchinson was very similar to that of Kennicott, and indeed Hebrew scholars in England and Europe since the Renaissance. Hutchinson's editors described how their mentor would apply his principles when at work:

In order to take a nearer view of the *Mosaic* philosophy, the original text must be consulted, simply as it stands, divested of those points or pricks for vowels which the modern *Jews* contrived: for this purpose our author chuses generally to follow the *Latin interlineary* version, as the most literal, and fittest to show the order of the *Hebrew* words; then, to investigate the true idea each word is intended to convey, he collates the different senses given it in the *Lexicons*. The authorities he makes most use of are, the *Roman* edition of *Marius de Calsio's concordance* of the *Hebrew* with other Eastern languages, *Castelli's lexicon heptaglotton*, *Schindler's pentaglot*, and *Buxtorff's large rabbinical dictionary*¹⁷.

This is the way any Christian Hebrew scholar would go about trying to understand the text of Scripture, although they would of course have the added advantage of the vowel points. But Hutchinson's excessive searchings in lexicons and dictionaries seem to have led him to see Hebrew as a secret code, a system of symbols rather than as a complete language, a result well understandable to anyone who has tried to learn Hebrew, built as it is around roots which have to be isolated in every word before it can even be found in the dictionaries.

Kennicott came out directly against the Hutchinsonians as early as

¹⁶ Generally on the attempts scholars have made to find an older version of the Hebrew Scriptures up until our own times, see *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions*, ed. H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford, 1940), pp. 30-32. See also D.S. Katz, "Millenarianism, the Jews, and Biblical Criticism in Seventeenth-Century England", *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, xiv (1989), 166-184.

¹⁷ [Spearman], *Abstract*, p. 42.

1756, in a short anonymous pamphlet directed against three recent sermons. Two aspects of the problem troubled Kennicott more than all others: the pseudo-scientific learned conceit of the Hutchinsonians, and the fact that they were invited to deliver sermons on formal occasions under the official auspices of Oxford University. It seemed ridiculous even to a great innovator as Kennicott was, that the entire Hebrew language “had been lamentably misunderstood, and the genuine meaning of both the Old and New Testaments dangerously conceal’d; till there arose, in the 18th century, this great champion of truth and revelation, this original in the discovery of roots physical and theological”. As Kennicott saw it, the entire Hutchinsonian doctrine was clear proof that “A little learning is a dangerous thing”:

For if a little learning and a great deal of conceit should prompt a man abusively to censure his superiors for not patronizing, and his equals for not encouraging, his own crude notions; should prompt him insolently to prescribe to the world wrong systems of science and (what may emphatically be call’d) vain philosophy; the consequence must be, that men truly learned will express their contempt at this manifestation of vanity and impertinence in the dictator.

Kennicott claimed that of late the “behaviour of the *Hutchinsonian* Divines, in this University and in other parts of the kingdom, is now become matter of general complaint”. Nevertheless, Kennicott did acknowledge the success which the Hutchinsonians had had in managing to “insinuate themselves into the good opinion of young Gentlemen”, chiefly by claiming that all other divines were either mistaken in their theology or positively wicked¹⁸.

The Hutchinsonians declined to reply in print to Kennicott’s rather general attack on their abilities and their motives. They waited until he published his second dissertation on the state of the printed Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and then unleashed Thomas Rutherforth to make their objections known. Kennicott’s major claim in this his second introductory work, was that the Samaritan Pentateuch provided an important and under-used source for understanding the original text of Scripture which had been corrupted over the centuries. Kennicott, once again, was thus striking at the heart of Hutchinsonian Hebraic Fundamentalism. Rutherforth gleefully reported instances in which Kennicott himself seems to have been a less than accurate copyist, but noted that

Though I should have been sorry to have had the *Hebrew text* entrusted with you to be new-modelled, as you might think proper, in a critical edition of it; yet as I was desirous, that the *Hebrew MSS* might be collated, I was glad

¹⁸ [Benjamin Kennicott], *A Word to the Hutchinsonians* (London, 1756), pp. 4-5, 6-7, 19.

to find, that you would undertake to collate them; because I knew of no one, so well qualified for this kind of work as yourself, who would be willing to set down to it.

Rutherford therefore was willing to have Kennicott continue in his work:

though I agreed with you, that there are errors in the printed Hebrew copies, yet in one point I could not help differing from you. As far as I was able to judge, no emendation could be so fully established by any or by all the means of emending, which you had proposed, as to warrant you in giving it a place in the *text*, if you should ever publish an edition of the Hebrew bible.

Kennicott, meanwhile, advertized a reply to Rutherford's work before it had even appeared¹⁹. His pamphlet covered familiar ground²⁰, as did Rutherford's reply in turn²¹.

III

Kennicott's prodigious efforts against the Hutchinsonians were ultimately in vain. It was especially in Oxford that Hutchinsonianism was adopted with fervor, as a sort of High Church theological science that might combat the dangers of Newtonianism and the new science which seemed so often to lead to Deism and worse. "Was not I talking of religious sects?", wrote Horace Walpole to a friend in the country during September 1753,

Methodism is quite decayed in Oxford, its cradle. In its stead, there prevails a delightful fantastic system, called the sect of the Hutchinsonians, of whom one seldom hears anything in town. After much inquiry, all I can discover is, that their religion consists in driving Hebrew to its fountain-head, till they find some word or other in every text of the Old Testament, which may seem figurative of something in the New. As their doctrine is novel, and requires much study, or at least much invention, one should think that they could not have settled half the canon of what they are to believe – and yet they go on zealously, trying to make and succeeding in making converts.

Walpole admitted that "I could not help smiling at the thoughts of *etymological salvation*", but his estimate of the strength and potential of the movement was considerably inaccurate²². When Edward Gibbon came

¹⁹ T. Rutherford, *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Kennicott* (Cambridge, 1761), pp. 1, 3, 5-6, 57-63, 69, 171-173.

²⁰ Benjamin Kennicott, *An Answer to a Letter* (London, 1762), pp. 5-7, 31.

²¹ T. Rutherford, *A Second Letter* (Cambridge, 1762), pp. 1-3.

²² Horace Walpole, *Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis, *et al.* (New Haven, 1937-1983),

up to Magdalen College in 1752, hoping to become an Orientalist, he was dissuaded from the subject by his tutor. But he noted that (apart from himself presumably), the only serious student there was George Horne, then “a young fellow (a future Bishop), who was deeply immersed in the follies of the Hutchinsonian system”²³. Bishop Horne would become indeed the central figure of the movement at Oxford as Hutchinsoniansim actually gained in strength in the second half of the eighteenth century.

That Hutchinsonianism survived to be lampooned by Walpole was due not only to the publication of the master’s works in 1742 by his indefatigable disciples Robert Spearman and Julius Bate, but also by its adoption by a number of prominent intellectuals. First among these was Alexander Stopford Catcott (1692-1749), whose sermon on 16 August 1735 at the mayor’s chapel before the corporation of Bristol and Lord Chief Justice Hardwicke on the “Supreme and Inferiour Elahim” provoked the first serious debate about Hutchinsonianism and the scientific evidence contained in the Old Testament. His son Alexander Catcott (1725-1779) promoted Hutchinsonianism at Oxford in the middle of the century, and later in Bristol as vicar of Temple Church²⁴. But the creed became genuinely respectable with its adoption by Duncan Forbes (1685-1747), the well-known Scottish president of the Court of Session, who in 1732 made a public confession of his new-found faith. In his view, some coherent approach had to be found to deal with the fact that “Atheism, Deism, and the whole Train of Opinions that attend what is commonly called Free-thinking, flow from a settled Disbelief and Contempt of Revelation”. Hutchinson’s emphasis on the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament made his theology very nearly inaccessible, but Forbes testified that he found it well worth while, once he had “rubb’d up the little *Hebrew* I had, and address’d myself to a more careful Perusal of the Books”²⁵.

In any case, it was not necessary to be a fervent supporter of all of Hut-

xxxv. 156. The same letter, to Richard Bentley, contains an amusing description of a riot in Worcester over the Jew Bill. See also the satirical remarks in T. Jack, *Symbolum H***nianum: Or, The Essential Articles of the H****n Creed* (London, 1750).

²³ Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life* (Penguin edn, Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 80. Magdalen was a center of Hebrew studies at Oxford since the Civil War: see D.S. Katz, “The Abendana Brothers and the Christian Hebraists of Seventeenth-Century England”, *Jnl. Eccl. Hist.*, xl (1989), 28-52.

²⁴ Alexander Stopford Catcott, *The Supreme and Inferiour Elahim* (London, 1736). Many of the polemical works written in protest over Catcott’s views are bound together as Bodl. Lib., G. Pamph. 250. See also, Neve & Porter, “Catcott”, for his views on geology and the importance of field work in proving the testimony of the Bible – unlike Hutchinson, who seems to have given up active field work after his initial disillusionment with Woodward.

²⁵ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; [Duncan Forbes], *A Letter to a Bishop* (London, 1732), pp. 3, 8, 33.

chinson's principles to recognize in his work a major contribution to biblical studies. As the poet Alexander Pope insisted in 1736, "Hutchinson is a very odd man and a very bad writer, but he has struck out very great lights and made very considerable discoveries by the way, as I have heard from people who know ten times more of these matters than I do". This was also the view held by Lord Bolingbroke: "Does Lord Bolingbroke understand Hebrew?", Pope was asked. "No, but he understands that sort of learning and what is writ about it". These were hardly the views of fanatics²⁶.

Apparently through the influence of Forbes and the younger Catcott, Hutchinsonian views found a strong foothold in mid-eighteenth-century Oxford, and were taken far more seriously than Walpole would suggest. The most distinguished of these Hutchinsonians was Gibbon's fellow-student George Horne (1730-1792), who became president of Magdalen College in 1768, and bishop of Norwich two years before his death. His tutor at University College, George Watson (1723?-1773), was also a believer, as was William Jones of Nayland (1726-1800), the celebrated churchman who became Horne's chaplain at Norwich. So too was Walter Hodges, the provost of Oriel College, a follower of Hutchinson. William Stevens (1732-1807), the editor of the works of Jones of Nayland, carried the principles of Hutchinsonianism into the nineteenth century, especially among the members of "Nobody's Friends", the club founded by members of his group in 1800. Stevens, Jones of Nayland, and their associates have often been seen as the link between the Nonjurors of the seventeenth century and the Tractarians and leaders of the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth²⁷.

Hutchinsonianism penetrated outside of England as well, and was especially influential in Scotland. According to one clergyman who had been ordained about 1820, at that time there was hardly a single non-Hutchinsonian minister in the diocese of Aberdeen²⁸. Chief among these was certainly the Rev. John Skinner, the episcopal incumbent of Longside, Aberdeenshire for 65 years until his death in 1807. Skinner was imprisoned in 1753 for having conducted church services during the late Jacobite uprising, and while in jail had time to contemplate the controversy

²⁶ Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*, ed. J.M. Osborn (Oxford, 1966), pp. 114, 214, 294.

²⁷ See generally, William Jones, *Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne* (London, 1795); George Horne, *Works*, ed. William Jones (2nd edn, London, 1818); William Jones, *Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works* (London, 1801): 12 vols. Cf. Kuhn, "Glory".

²⁸ W. Walker, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Skinner* (2nd edn, London, 1883), p. 165.

over the notorious Jew Bill of that year which would have given some of them limited civil rights. Skinner applied himself to Hebrew, in part to provide a moral and more scholarly set of arguments against Jewish emancipation, and soon was led to adopt the Hutchinsonian interpretation of Scripture²⁹. Skinner's son of the same name became bishop of Aberdeen, and passed the see on to his own son afterwards³⁰. All were Hutchinsonians, and made this the philosophy of Aberdeen diocese until the second half of the nineteenth century. From this nest came, among others, Alexander Nicol, appointed Regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford in 1822, who with his brother "read Hebrew without the points"³¹. Another Scottish Hutchinsonian was the Rev. James Andrew, who in 1823 published his "Hebrew Dictionary and Grammar without points"³². As in England, these Scottish Hutchinsonians were strict biblical literalists, and saw the Old Testament as being meant for Christians even more than for Jews, who deliberately misled the gentiles, "first with their *Mishna* and *Gemara*, then with their vowel-points, and *Keriketibs*, and in the end, with their whole farrago of Talmudic nonesense, all with a view to obscure, and pervert the text, which they durst not alter or corrupt"³³.

Most importantly, Hutchinsonianism was successfully transplanted to America, where it became the ruling method of scriptural interpretation at King's College, New York, which after the Revolution would be renamed Columbia University. The conquest of King's was due to the conversion of its first president, Samuel Johnson (1696-1772), a leader in the revolt against Congregationalism at Yale in the 1720s, and later the most noteworthy disciple of George Berkeley in America. Johnson was at first much interested in science, and was drawn to Newton's discoveries, but about 1743 he chanced upon Duncan Forbes's *Letter to a Bishop*. Johnson was already a considerable Hebraist, and as he himself put it, Hutchinsonianism "opened to him a new scene of study and inquiry which as it depended on his favorite Hebrew was very engaging (with regard both to philosophy and theology)". Johnson soon devoured the twelve volumes of Hutchinson's works, with which he in the main wholeheartedly agreed, though he could not be drawn to "think so very hardly of Philo

²⁹ John Skinner, *Theological Works* (Aberdeen, 1809), I. xii, xiii, cvi-cxiii, cxxxi-cxliii, cliii-clxxv, cxcv; II. 1-8.

³⁰ W. Walker, *The Life and Times of John Skinner Bishop of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, 1887); *idem*, *Rev. John Skinner*, p. 156.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160. Alexander Nicol held the post for only six years before he died in 1828. Nicol was succeeded as Regius professor by E.B. Pusey, who held the chair for 54 years.

³² James Andrew, *Hebrew Dictionary and Grammar* (n.p., 1823).

³³ Rev. John Skinner to Dr. Doig, 15 April 1796: repr. *Works*, I. cxi.

and the Jewish Rabbis, however bad they were''. Johnson also supplemented Hutchinson's books with works by Stillingfleet, Ralph Cudworth, and Theophilus Gale. His search seemed to confirm other contemporary philosophical works that he had read, and he asserted more than once that

It is remarkable that Bishop Berkeley in Ireland, Mr. Hutchinson in England, and Abbé Pluch in France, the greatest men of the age, without any communication with each other should at the same time though by different media come into the same conclusion, namely that the Holy Scriptures teach the only true system of natural philosophy as well as the only true religion, and that Mr. Franklin in America should be at the same time without any design by his electrical experiments greatly confirm it.

This was a view he actively supported for the last thirty years of his life³⁴.

Samuel Johnson was very anxious to promote Hutchinsonian doctrine and the study of the Hebrew language in America. In 1752 he put out his *Elementa Philosophica* at Benjamin Franklin's press, the first textbook in philosophy published in America. In this he deliberately inserted digressions about Hutchinsonianism, which to his dismay were excised from the English edition³⁵. When he became first president of King's College the following year, he had more scope for spreading the new gospel. Indeed, he left a paper to be read at his decease instructing the governors to elect as his successor a man who acknowledged the Hebrew tongue "as being the mother of all languages and eloquence as well as the fountain of all knowledge and true wisdom"³⁶. Johnson wrote to Archbishop Secker in 1760 towards that end, suggesting as the next president of King's the famous Hutchinsonian George Horne, on the basis of that divine's statement of the case against the followers of Newton³⁷. But Secker rejected Horne out of hand, describing him as "a good man, but deeply tainted with Mr. Hutchinson's notions in philosophy and Hebrew, both which I take to be groundless, notwithstanding a superficial attempt of his to prove a seeming agreement between the former and Sir

³⁴ Samuel Johnson, "Memoirs", in *Samuel Johnson*, ed. H. & C. Schneider (New York, 1929), i. 3, 6, 30-31, 45-46. Cf. Johnson to Cadwallar Colden, 19 February 1753 in *ibid.*, ii. 303-304. Generally on Johnson, see also T.B. Chandler, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (New York, 1805), esp. pp. 2, 4-5, 76-85, 116-123, 201-204; E.E. Beardsley, *Life and Correspondence of Samuel Johnson* (New York, 1874); T. Hornberger, "Samuel Johnson of Yale and King's College: A Note on the Relation of Science and Religion in Provincial America", *New Engl. Qly.*, viii (1935), 378-397.

³⁵ Samuel Johnson, *Elementa Philosophica* (Philadelphia, 1752): repr. *Johnson*, ed. Schneider, ii. 463, 510-511.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, iv. 115-116: dated September 1659? Cf. Johnson to East Apthorp, 1 December 1759; repr. *ibid.*, iv. 56.

³⁷ Johnson to Secker, 15 February 1760: repr. *ibid.*, iv. 59-60.

Isaac Newton, whom Mr. Hutchinson held to be an atheist''. Secker certainly knew that Johnson was a follower of Hutchinson as well, but he was not about to promote the spread of the doctrine any further: in the end, Secker's man, Miles Cooper, "not unskilled in Hebrew", got the post³⁸. After Samuel Johnson's retirement from King's College he devoted himself entirely to Hebrew, and consulting with Hutchinsonians in England produced his own Hebrew-English grammar on Hutchinsonian principles. He also tried to find support for a Hutchinsonian professor of Hebrew in America³⁹. As a Hutchinsonian, Samuel Johnson was first and foremost a biblical literalist, and a year before his death he advised his ten-year-old grandson (who had already been reading Hebrew since the age of six, like Johnson himself) to pay special attention to the Old Testament⁴⁰.

For English Protestants worried about the continuing validity of the Old Testament, the Hutchinsonians even in the nineteenth century provided at least a point of reference. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was deeply troubled by the first chapters of Genesis, especially by the significance of the term "firmament", and in his notebook wrote a memo to himself to ask his Jewish friend Hyman Hurwitz, later first professor of Hebrew at University College London, the meaning of the original Hebrew word⁴¹. At the same time, Coleridge clarified his own views in print:

We are far from being Hutchinsonians, nor have we found much to respect in the twelve volumes of Hutchinson's works, either as biblical comment or natural philosophy: though we give him credit for orthodoxy and good intentions. But his interpretation of the first nine verses of Genesis xi. seems not only rational in itself, and consistent with after accounts of the sacred historian, but proved to be the literal sense of the Hebrew text. His explanation of the cherubim is pleasing and plausible: we dare not say more. Those who would wish to learn the more important points of the Hutchinsonian doctrine in the most favorable form, and in the shortest possible space, we

³⁸ Secker to Johnson, 4 November 1760: repr. *ibid.*, iv. 70-73.

³⁹ Samuel Johnson, *An English and Hebrew Grammar* (London, 1767), repr. 1771 & 1776: cf. Julius Bate, *An Hebrew Grammar* (London, 1751) and John Parkhurst, *A Methodical Hebrew Grammar Without Points* (London, 1765). See also Johnson to Parkhurst, 1765?: *Johnson*, ed. Schneider, i. 350; J. to W.S. Johnson, 8 June 1767: *ibid.*, i. 405-406; J. to Robert Lowth, 25 June 1767: *ibid.*, i. 409-410; Lowth to J., 3 May 1768, 15 May 1770, 16 May 1771: repr. Chandler, *Johnson*, pp. 200-205 and last letter in *Johnson*, ed. Schneider, i. 478; Parkhurst to J., 8 June 1771: *ibid.*, i. 478-480; J. to P., 1 November 1771: *ibid.*, i. 480-481. See also I.S. Meyer, "Doctor Samuel Johnson's Grammar and Hebrew Psalter", in *Essays on Jewish Life and Thought* [Baron Festschrift], ed. J.L. Blau, et al. (New York, 1959), pp. 359-374, where he also reprints Stephen Sewall to J., 28 December 1767, and J. to S., 1 March 1768 about the grammar, pp. 372-374.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴¹ S.T. Coleridge, *The Notebooks*, ed. K. Coburn (London, 1957-), iii. 4418 (August 1818).

can refer to Duncan Forbes's Letter to a Bishop. If our own judgment did now withhold our assent, we should never be *ashamed* of a conviction held, professed, and advocated by so good, and wise a man, as Duncan Forbes.

Indeed, Coleridge adopted the Hutchinsonian view of the Confusion at Babel, as summarized by Forbes, that it was in actuality a confusion of the single "lip" (*safah*) or religious confession, rather than of "tongue" (*lashon*), a fact obscured by the allegedly inaccurate translations from the original Hebrew⁴². Coleridge's copy of Forbes's book is annotated, and bears the marks of careful reading⁴³. In sum, Coleridge saw "the Cabala of the Hutchinsonian School as the dotage of a few weak-minded individuals"⁴⁴, but adopted some of their interpretations and appreciated their emphasis on the Old Testament and on the Hebrew text⁴⁵.

So too did William Kirby (1759-1850) discuss Hutchinsonianism in his Bridgewater Treatise, arguing that only that school had made "inquiry as to what is delivered in Scripture on physical subjects, or with respect to the causes of the various phenomena exhibited in our system, or in the physical universe". The Hutchinsonians "perhaps have gone too far in an opposite direction", but they alone recognized the great truth with which Kirby began his treatise, that "in order rightly to understand the voice of God in nature, we ought to enter her temple with the Bible in our hands"⁴⁶. Hutchinsonianism even received poetic expression in the "Jubilate Agno" by Christopher Smart (1722-1771), a poem admittedly written when he was confined in a private madhouse in Bethnal Green, but notable for its complete rejection of Newtonian science by the use of proofs taken from the works of Hutchinson and his followers⁴⁷. These favorable general references to the school helped to spread its influence and encourage people to search the Old Testament for themselves. The reaction of Richard Chenevix, bishop of Waterford and Lismore, was typical when he received a set of Hutchinson's works: "Thô I can n't agree with

⁴² S.T. Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. B.E. Rooke, in *Collected Works* (London, 1971-), iv. III. 502-503 (first pub. 1818). Cf. [Forbes], *Letter*, p. 31.

⁴³ S.T. Coleridge, *Marginalia*, I, ed. G. Whalley, *Works*, xii. 417.

⁴⁴ S.T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection and The Confessions* (London, 1884), pp. 313-314, from MS. confessions in his notes on the Book of Common Prayer.

⁴⁵ Coleridge, *Notebooks*, iii. 4401 (March 1818).

⁴⁶ William Kirby, *On the Power Wisdom and Goodness of God* [7th Bridgewater Treatise] (London, 1835), I. xvii, xlix-l, lxxi (disagreeing with Parkhurst and the Hutchinsonians on the meaning of the word "cherub"), lxxxiv-lxxxv (but agreeing with their understanding of "firmament" as espansion).

⁴⁷ Christopher Smart, *The Poetical Works*, ed. K. Williamson & M. Walsh (Oxford, 1980-1983), i, with appx. pp. 131-132, "Smart and the Hutchinsonians". Cf. K. Williamson, "Smart's *Principia*: Science and Anti-Science in *Jubilate Agno*", *Rev. Eng. Stud.*, xxx (1979), 409-422.

him in many of his Conjectures, yet my Curiosity induces me to read y^e whole’’⁴⁸.

IV

Leslie Stephen, who also wrote John Hutchinson’s entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, dismissed as a “little eddy of thought” this “school which, at the middle of the century, represented the influence upon theology of the great University of Oxford”. Stephen discusses the views of the Hutchinsonians at all, he writes, “only in so far as the crotchets of weak minds may indicate the general current of speculation”. Mesmerized by the extremity and outlandishness of the Hutchinsonians, Stephen, like many others, failed to see them as somewhat of a landmark in English intellectual and religious history.

First of all, the Hutchinsonians marked the end of the influence of the Jewish mystical tradition on the Christian interpretation of the Bible. This influence, which was always linguistic in content, began with Pico della Mirandola in fifteenth-century Italy, and continued to the Hutchinsonians, until it received its final blow with the discoveries about Sanskrit made by Sir William Jones at the end of the eighteenth century⁴⁹. Unlike nearly all of those concerned with the Hebrew text, the Hutchinsonians were blatantly, even obsessively, anti-Jewish, and saw the modern exemplars of the Old Testament heroes as the authors of innumerable sinister plots to subvert mankind and destroy Christianity.

Hutchinson was fond of repeating that when Christ told his disciples to search out the Scriptures he was referring to the original Hebrew copies extant in his time, not to the post-Christian Jewish forgeries, commentaries, and traditions. Indeed, he wrote, “every one knows, the *Jews* have not only grown more ignorant in these Matters, but worse and worse ever since”. Hutchinson understood that in rejecting the Jews as authentic interpreters of Scripture, he would incur the “Displeasure of those who have spent most of their Time in studying, and making themselves Masters of all their allegorical, or other ways of Evasion”. But even Jesus decried the Jews of his own time for their lack of knowledge. “What great Knowledge can we expect from any of the Persons educated to understand this Rubbish”, wrote Hutchinson, “when they are newly converted, save that they were sick of it’’⁵⁰. So too did Hutchinson’s edi-

⁴⁸ Chenevix to a lady, n.d. (after 1749?): bound in with Bodl. Lib., 8° Jur. R. 46.

⁴⁹ On Sanskrit, see generally, S.N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth-Century British Attitudes to India* (Cambridge, 1968); R. Gombrich, *On Being Sanskritic* (Oxford, 1978); M. Bernal, *Black Athena* (London, 1987), pp. 227-230.

⁵⁰ Hutchinson, *Principia. Part II.*, in *Works*, II. xxxviii-xxvix; *idem*, *Moses Sine Principio*, in *Works*, III. x-xi: first pub. 1749.

tors continue this theme, denouncing “their *talmuds* are the grossest forgeries that ever were attempted to be imposed upon the world”, and the Jews themselves, who claim that the Old Testament “cannot be understood without the interpretation of their *wise men*, who, at the same time, are perpetually contradicting each other in things the most trivial and foolish”. Their nefarious invention of vowel points to pervert the meaning of Scripture was just one of the diabolical plots of the Jews, “whose forgeries are the very *mystery of iniquity*, and themselves literally *Anti-christ*”. The absurd Jewish reverence for the pretended name of God, and indeed their very picture of the Deity, were all blasphemy, as they made God “the author of actions which any rational being would be ashamed of”. Hutchinson’s only consolation was that the Jewish rabbis “unluckily have not had wit enough to give their imprudent lies the air of probability”⁵¹.

One of the most evil inventions that the Hutchinsonians laid at the door of the Jews was the creation of the Islamic religion and the Arabic language:

Indeed, there are strong and certain presumptions, that the implacable enemies of CHRIST were all along the chief promoters of this dark business. It was transacted at the same time they were so indefitigably employed in the invention of pointing; *Talmuds*, grammars to suit their false interpretations, and the similitude between the two projects is obvious and glaring: the fabulous stories of both are alike ridiculous, the *Hebrew* words taken in and wrested the same way, from plurals to singulars, letters varied, &c. and they say the two grammars agree as exactly in their features, as if children of one and the same father. What is said in praise of this suppositious language, this *Babel* of confusion, mus sink it for ever with men of sense, that it has an hundred, nay, five hundred words for one thing. Could this possibly be the speech of one people? What imaginable title can it have to simplicity, certainty, or affinity with *Hebrew*, the most natural, distinct, and terminate of all tongues?

Hutchinson and his followers rejected the idea that Islamic sources might shed any light on biblical matters: “The sacred scriptures are able to explain themselves sufficiently; and it cannot be thought of without indignation, that it should be suggested, that they need *Mahometan* jargon to illustrate their meaning”. As far as they were concerned, the Jewish invention of Islam and Arabic was merely the last stage in a more comprehensive plan: after the Jews fabricated the vowel points, the Mishnah, the Talmud, the *kabbalah*, and appointed their rabbis to expound these

⁵¹ [Spearman], *Abstract*, pp. 3, 199-200, 203, 205. Cf. John Hutchinson, *The Covenant in the Cherubim*, in *Works*, vii. 74: first pub. 1749.

murky works, they “at last set up that outrageous impostor *Mahomet*, all to facilitate their main plot, the subversion of *Christianity*⁵².

What was needed now was a rededication of attention to the mysteries of the Old Testament, a rejection of Newtonian nonsense, and a purging of the Hebrew text of Jewish outrages. The Hutchinsonians regretted that although at least the Western churches had largely been spared the rabbinical contagion throughout the Middle Ages, during the Reformation the Protestants “appealed to the Scriptures: but as they had never studied *Hebrew*, the *Jews* were extremely forward to offer their service in this exigence, and they met with too, too favourable a reception”. The result of this academic fraternization with the apostates, they claimed, was that “we find Europe over-run with *rabbinitism* and the *talmud*, and no man admitted to preach the gospel before he had passed his courses under some avowed enemy of *CHRIST*. The consequence was, and a very natural one too, that the very fundamentals of *Christianity* were rendered precarious, and became the subject of public disputes”. Those Protestants who were aware of the dangers implicit in such a course shied away from Old Testament study, with the result that “the *Hebrew* tongue, left to the ignorant and vile comments of those who knew nothing of its excellency, is grown contemptible even to a proverb”. This was a situation which the Hutchinsonians aimed to put right⁵³.

But apart from their eccentric anti-Jewish brand of Hebraism, the Hutchinsonians are important because they provide the link between the bibliolatry of the seventeenth century and the scientific biblical criticism of the nineteenth. In a sense, they were linguistic alchemists, whose misguided researches led to some genuine discoveries. At the very least, their intense promotion of Hebrew studies had the effect of popularizing the language, for even to be an opponent of the Hutchinsonians one had to know Hebrew well. We know of some scholars who took up Hebrew studies at a late age for exactly that purpose, and to defend Newtonian

⁵² [Spearman], *Abstract*, pp. 115-117, 205-206, paraphrasing from John Hutchinson, *The Confusion of Tongues*, in *Works*, iv; and *Cherubim*. This theory may be original to Hutchinson, although it had long been suggested that Mohammed may have been influenced by a Jewish tutor. Hutchinson's explanation does not appear in the most profound defence of Islam, Henry Stubbe, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, ed. H.M.K. Shairani (London, 1911). Cf. P.M. Holt, *A Seventeenth-Century Defender of Islam: Henry Stubbe (1632-76) and his Book* (London, 1972); J.R. Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1983); S.C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York, 1937); N. Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1960); *idem*, *Islam: Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh, 1966); *idem*, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe* (2nd edn, London, 1979).

⁵³ [Spearman], *Abstract*, pp. 206, 231-232. Hutchinson's editors singled out for blame Buxtorf, Broughton, and Lightfoot. The proverb quoted can be found in *The Poems of Richard Corbett*, ed. J.A.W. Bennett & H.R. Trevor-Roper (Oxford, 1955), pp. 56-59.

science. Even more significantly, their unwavering insistence on the absolute validity of every jot and tittle of the Hebrew text makes them precursors of the Fundamentalists, those Americans who swore by the Niagara Bible Conference in New York. Most Fundamentalists would support the doctrines defined in 1878 there by James H. Brookes (1830-1897), the Presbyterian minister from St. Louis who edited one of their influential periodicals, *The Truth*. First among these was an affirmation of the inerrant inspiration of the Bible, preserved completely from error in the original manuscripts. Their defence of the biblical text against science, not now diabolized in the writings of Newton but in those of Charles Darwin, is most well known in the "monkey trial" in 1925 of John T. Scopes, a science teacher from Dayton, Tennessee, but their emphasis on the absolute authority of the Bible and the imminent coming of Christ has continued until the present day, in churches of several denominations calling themselves "evangelical" in order to escape the pejorative associations of the original name. The historian of the movement rightly stresses the millenarian background of the Fundamentalists, but by neglecting the Hutchinsonians and their own origins in the continuing controversy over the Old Testament, truncates the roots from which the movement grew, to form the enormously powerful group of churches that it is today⁵⁴.

Perhaps the greatest lesson we have learned from Dick Popkin's writings is that even the most bizarre and wrong-headed ideas can have an influence on history no less than the great scientific and philosophical discoveries. La Peyrère's polygenetic theory is integral to the understanding of modern racism; the Jewish Indian theory for the understanding of seventeenth-century intellectual life. It simply will not do, with Auden, to dismiss with a smile that

A colonel from Cheltenham stopped everyone
To tell them the lost Ten Tribes were there.⁵⁵

We need to ask ourselves why certain strange ideas have survived and what effect they had. The Hutchinsonians, then, also deserve a place in Popkin's Pantheon. As he himself would put it, "When this is done we may be in a much better position to understand how we actually got from the past to the present"⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ See esp. E.R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Chicago, 1970). See also S.G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (n.p., 1931); L. Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement* (The Hague, 1963).

⁵⁵ W.H. Auden, "A Happy New Year", iii: repr. *The Oxford Book of Satirical Verse*, ed. G. Grigson (Oxford, 1980), p. 418.

⁵⁶ Popkin, "Religious Background", p. 50.

PRIESTLEY, THE JEWS AND THE MILLENNIUM*

J. VAN DEN BERG

In a recent study on apocalyptic thought, Professor Popkin mentions Joseph Priestley as an eighteenth-century believer in the idea of a "triumphant apocalypse", a transformation of the world which would result in a wonderful and glorious future for humanity¹. Priestley's millenarianism (or millennialism) has been dealt with in two studies, both of which concentrate on its political aspects². In this essay, written in honor of a scholar whose studies in this field have been so instrumental in stimulating the interest in millenarianism and its concomitant phenomena, I intend to give special attention to the connection between Priestley's theological position, his attempts to bridge the cleavage between Jews and Christians and his expectations with regard to the future restoration and conversion of the Jews.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) was a prolific writer in the field of theology. While not a deep or epoch-making theologian, his works reveal that he was a scholar of a broad theological erudition. His critical mind could lead him to take a radical stand on disputed theological matters – according to family tradition he was a man of "violent convictions"³ – but his religious commitment and his firm loyalty to what he considered the authentic Christian tradition are beyond all doubt. In his theological development he went through various stages, each of which represented a specific strand in the complex of opinions within eighteenth-century English Dissent⁴.

* I thank Dr. Norma E. Emerton, Cambridge, for the correction of the English text.

¹ R.H. Popkin, "The Triumphant Apocalypse and the Catastrophic Apocalypse", in *Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Humanity*, ed. A. Cohen & Steven Lee (New York, 1986), pp. 131-138.

² C. Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England* (Baltimore & London, 1975), ch. 6; J. Fruchtman Jr., *The Apocalyptic Politics of Richard Price and Joseph Priestley: A Study in Late Eighteenth-Century English Republican Millenarianism* (Philadelphia, 1983).

³ Thus wrote a descendant, Hilaire Belloc's daughter Eleanor Jebb, in the "Foreword" to a historical novel on Priestley: J.G. Gillam, *The Crucible* (London, 1954), p. XI.

⁴ For his religious and theological development, see first of all his *Memoirs* of 1806, of which the most recent edition is that by J. Lindsay, *Autobiography of Joseph Priestley* (Bath, 1970); furthermore, A. Holt, *A Life of Joseph Priestley* (1931, repr. Westport, Conn., 1970); E.M. Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America* (Cambridge, USA, 1952), ch. 16; and M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 471-490.

Born into a dissenting family⁵, he was reared, first by his parents, then by an aunt, in the spirit of a traditional but not bigoted Calvinism. His mother was "a woman of exemplary piety"; his father, who carefully taught him the Westminster Catechism, "also had a strong sense of religion, praying with his family morning and evening", and in later life became fond of the writings of George Whitefield, while his aunt "was truly Calvinistic in principle, but . . . far from confining salvation to those who thought as she did on religious subjects"⁶. While at a later stage he drifted far away from his Calvinistic background, he remained a convinced Dissenter, who in public life championed the political rights of Dissenters⁷ and in his personal life retained some of the most characteristic elements of the Dissenting tradition: the emphasis on family prayers⁸ and on Sunday observance⁹.

The deviations from traditional doctrine appeared already when he was a young man. The elders of the congregation in which he had always attended refused to admit him as a communicant member: they did not think him "quite orthodox" because he did not believe that all the human race was liable to the wrath of God only on account of the sin of Adam¹⁰. After being for a short period influenced by a "Baxterian" minister¹¹ he became an Arminian, but "had by no means rejected the doctrine of the trinity or that of the atonement". For three years he studied at the Dissenting Academy in Daventry, then became the minister of a Dissenting church in Needham Market¹², where in a theological respect he went one step further. Though he had made it a rule "to introduce nothing that could lead to controversy into the pulpit", it was soon found out that he had become an "Arian" and thus had crossed the critical boundary between Trinitarian and anti-Trinitarian thinking. Still, he

⁵ "His parents were members of the congregational Church at Upper Chapel, Heckmondwike": *DNB*.

⁶ *Autobiography*, p. 71.

⁷ Fruchtmann, *Apocalyptic Politics*, p. 53.

⁸ *A Serious Address to Masters of Families with Forms of Family-Prayer* (1794: 1st ed. 1769), in *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestley*. LL.D., F.R.S. etc., ed. J.T. Rutt (1817-1832, repr. New York, 1972) [henceforth, *Works*], xxi. 429-473.

⁹ "The Observance of the Lord's Day vindicated": *Works*, xx. 330-351. He did not plead, however, for a rigid form of Sunday observance: cf. *Autobiography*, p. 74.

¹⁰ For this and for what follows, see *Autobiography*, pp. 73, 79.

¹¹ For the so-called "Baxterian Middle Way" (named after the seventeenth-century Puritan theologian Richard Baxter) see R. Thomas, "Presbyterians in Transition", in *The English Presbyterians*, ed. C.G. Bolam et al. (London, 1968), pp. 134ff.; J. van den Berg & G.F. Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) and The Netherlands* (Leiden, 1987), p. 8.

¹² In the period of Priestley's ministry it became a distinctly Presbyterian congregation because of his refusal to accept support from the orthodox "Independent fund": see J. Goring, "The Break-Up of the Old Dissent", in *The English Presbyterians*, ed. Bolam, p. 214.

had not yet gone over to the more extreme Socinian position with its denial, not only of the full divinity, but also of the pre-existence of Christ. When, between 1661 and 1667, he was a tutor at Warrington Academy, he and his friends, who were all Arians, even wondered at the only Socinian minister in the neighborhood. The more radical step was taken in Leeds, where since 1667 he was minister of a Presbyterian congregation. It was not an unusual step: for quite a number of "rational Dissenters" (and for a handful of Anglicans) Arianism was a transitional stage on the road to a clear-cut Unitarian theology, which was marked by an exclusive concentration on the idea of the unity of God, but in the process of transition Priestley played a prominent part¹³. Priestley's decision to become "what is called a Socinian" was prompted by the reading of Nathaniel Lardner's "Letter concerning the Logos"¹⁴. From that time onward he was a convinced and consistent Unitarian: "... after giving the closest attention to the subject, I have seen more and more reason to be satisfied with that opinion to this day, and likewise to be more impressed with the idea of its importance"¹⁵.

Within a comparatively short period Priestley had moved from a moderately conservative to a very progressive theological position. He considered himself more a reformer than an innovator, as appears from his well-known remark made in the "General Conclusion" of his *An History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1782), in which he defended himself against an attack by Bishop Richard Hurd: "it is not a *progressive religion*, but a *progressive reformation* of a corrupted religion, that is pleaded for". Though of course as a Unitarian he rejected the theology of the Reformers, he could appeal to the progressive character of the sixteenth-century Reformation: "If the Reformation was not progressive, why does not this bishop prefer the state of it under John Huss and Jerome of Prague to that of Luther and Cranmer?"¹⁶. The overarching theme of his theological works is the ideal of the restoration of Christianity to its primitive purity. In this ideal the past and the future, and thus the historical and the eschatological element, are intertwined. Of course, the great problem was how and where to find the criteria for a reconstruction of the past which could serve as a pattern for Priestley's "progressive reformation". In an illuminative essay on Priestley's "rational theology" Margaret Canovan has shown that there was an inherent paradox in

¹³ For this, see Wilbur, *History of Unitarianism*, pp. 293-315 and H.L. Short, "Presbyterians Under a New Name", in *The English Presbyterians*, ed. Bolam, esp. pp. 219-235.

¹⁴ Published in 1759 under the pseudonym Philalethes: *A Letter writ in . . . 1730 concerning the question whether the Logos supplied the Place of a Human Soul in the person of Jesus Christ*.

¹⁵ *Autobiography*, p. 93.

¹⁶ *Works*, v. 503.

Priestley's approach. Priestley was a convinced Christian who believed in the necessity of revelation, but who at the same time was guided by a simplistic rationalist concept of truth: because truth was true for all times, true religion could not have a particular historical reference. All theological "accretions" had to be removed in order to reach the firm ground of pure undefiled truth. This process however, created a vacuum which was filled by an "eighteenth-century interpretation, smuggled in as part of the fact itself. His purpose, then, was to understand history in order to reject it"¹⁷.

While Priestley adhered to the idea of revelation, as a critical historian he rejected the idea of a literal inspiration of the Bible.

This high notion of inspiration is as *unnecessary*, with respect to the proper use of the Gospel history, as it is indefensible in itself. All the great ends of the Gospel will be sufficiently answered, if provision be made for the credibility of the *principal facts*, such as the reality of the *moral discourses*, and especially of the *miracles*, *death*, and *resurrection* of Christ, as a proof of his divine mission, and a confirmation of our faith in the assurances he has given us with respect to a general *resurrection*, and his second coming to *judge the world*, and to *reward all men according to their works*¹⁸.

This moderate critical attitude gave him freedom to dispense with those elements which ran counter to his Unitarian conviction (e.g., the idea of a miraculous conception of Christ¹⁹), while it left room for a belief in the fulfilment of the most important biblical prophecies. For Priestley there was a verifiable connection between prophecy and event: the Old Testament prophecies with regard to the Messiah were already partly fulfilled; the same was the case with Christ's prophecies regarding the Jewish people²⁰, and the "corruptions of Christianity" had already been foretold in the Book of Revelation²¹.

Priestley launched a full-blown attack on what he considered the prin-

¹⁷ Margaret Canovan, "The Irony of History: Priestley's Rational Theology", *The Price-Priestley Letter*, iv (1980), 16-25.

¹⁸ "Preface" to *A Harmony of the Evangelists*, in *Greek* (1777), *Works*, xx. 10.

¹⁹ See in particular his expositions on this subject in *An History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ* (1786), *Works*, vii. 57-129. In his discussion with David Levi (to be mentioned below), he shielded himself against the consequences which might be drawn (and which Levi indeed drew) from his rejection of the miraculous conception: "As to the disbelief of the miraculous conception drawing after it the disbelief of the whole Gospel history, judge from fact, and not from imagination . . . To say nothing of myself, can it be shewn to have been the case with any other person who has thought as I do with respect to this subject?", *Works*, xx. 255.

²⁰ *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, ii (1763); *Works*, ii. 177ff.

²¹ *Notes on the Books of Scripture* (1804), *Works*, xiv. 443, where Priestley in his introduction to the notes on Revelation writes: ". . . the correspondence of the prophecy with the events, is so striking, as of itself to prove its divine origin".

cipal corruption of Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity, in the tracts he published in 1770 under the title *An Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity*. The fifth of these tracts (which seem to have had a very wide circulation²²) contains an exposition on the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, which Priestley strongly and unequivocally denied. "If you ask who, then, is Jesus Christ, if he be not God; I answer . . . that 'Jesus of Nazareth' was 'a man approved of God – by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him'. Acts.II.22"; and in order to leave no one in doubt with regard to his intention, he added that "man" must mean "the same kind of being with yourselves". The belief in "the doctrine of the Divine Unity" justified a separation from those churches which held to Trinitarian doctrine. Besides,

the great offence to Jews, Mahometans, and the world at large, being the doctrine of the Trinity, it is highly necessary that societies of Christians should be formed expressly on this principle of the Divine Unity, that it may be evident to all the world, that there are Christians, and societies of Christians, who hold the doctrine of the Trinity in as much abhorrence as they themselves can do. For the conversion of Jews and Mahometans to Christianity, while it is supposed to contain the doctrine of the Trinity, no person who knows, or has heard of Jews or Mahometans, can ever expect²³.

The intention of his theological and philosophical works was apologetic, as appears from what he wrote in his autobiography:

I can truly say, that the greatest satisfaction I receive from the success of my philosophical pursuits, arises from the weight it may give to my attempts to defend Christianity, and to free it from those corruptions which prevent its reception with philosophical and thinking persons, whose influence with the vulgar, and the unthinking, is very great²⁴.

In the context of his apologetic theology Jewish religion played a not inconsiderable part. In his first major theological work, *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, which appeared in three volumes between 1772 and 1774, he declared that "the Jewish and Christian revelations . . . have so close a connection that they must stand and fall together". While for Priestley the Christian religion was "the completion of the whole scheme", he used the term "this truly catholic religion" in the context of a number of observations which related to "the Jewish and Christian

²² Wilbur even mentions the almost incredibly high circulation of 60,000 copies; according to Wilbur, from the date of the appearance of the *Appeal* as a turning-point, "one can trace a revival of devotion and active zeal for their cause among the rational Dissenters": *History of Congregationalism*, pp. 297f.

²³ *Works*, ii. 394f.

²⁴ *Autobiography*, p. 111.

religions, jointly’’²⁵. Priestley saw the idea of the unity of God – the only object of worship and praise – as the great doctrine which holds together the Old and New Testament, Jewish and (true) Christian religion:

Considering how strongly this great article, the worship of one God only, is guarded in all the books of Scripture, it would seem impossible that it should ever be infringed by any who profess to hold the books of the Old and New Testament for the rule of their faith and practice; and yet we shall see that this very article was the subject of one of the first and the most radical of all the corruptions of Christianity. For upon the very same principles, and in the very same manner, by which dead men came to be worshipped by the ancient idolaters, there was introduced into the Christian church, in the first place, the idolatrous worship of Jesus Christ²⁶.

The same theme is fundamental to what is no doubt his best-known, perhaps also his most notorious theological work²⁷, *An History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, which appeared in two volumes in 1782²⁸. The opening passage is unambiguous: “*The unity of God* is a doctrine on which the greatest stress is laid in the whole system of revelation. To guard this most important article was the principal object of the Jewish religion”. The Jews expected a Messiah “in whom themselves and all the nations of the earth should be blessed; but none of their prophets gave them an idea of any other than a man like themselves in that illustrious character, and no other did they ever expect, or do they expect to this day”. Jesus “made no other pretensions”. The teaching of the apostles was consonant with that of the prophets and of Jesus, and also the ancient Jewish Christian church held the opinion “that Christ was simply a *man*, and not either God Almighty, or a *super-angelic being*”. The “primitive Jewish church” was “properly Unitarian”²⁹.

Because of his theological position, Priestley had a special interest in the Jews, who indeed through the ages were believers in the fundamental doctrine of the Divine unity³⁰. He had a sharp eye for the evils perpetrated by Christians against the Jews in the course of history; perhaps no

²⁵ *Works*, ii. 120, 154.

²⁶ *Works*, ii. 280.

²⁷ For legal steps, taken in Holland in connection with the Dutch translation of the first volume, see J.P. Heering, “Ten strijde tegen het verlichte Christendom!”, in *Op de bres, 200 jaar Haagsch Genootschap tot verdediging van de christelijke godsdienst (1785-1985)* (The Hague, 1985), pp. 8ff. The sources do not authenticate the story, mentioned by Thomas Peirson in his *Bibliotheca Peirsoniana* and repeated by the editor of Priestley’s *Works* (v. 13n.) that the book “was burnt by the hands of the common hangman in the city of Dort”.

²⁸ Priestley originally intended to make it the fourth part of the *Institutes: Works*, i. 158n.

²⁹ *Works*, v. 16-19.

³⁰ *History of Early Opinions*, Book III, ch. I: *Works*, vi., esp. 377ff.

other work on church history paid so much attention to "the sufferings of the Jews" as his *A General History of the Christian Church* (1790)³¹. England was not less guilty than other countries: "We may say that we, of this generation, have not persecuted the Jews, and that they have no particular reason to complain of *us*. But they were grievously persecuted by the English nation in former times, and have much to complain of *them*"³². Of course his mentioning the many acts of cruelty against Jews and heretics also, or even primarily, served to expose the persecuting spirit of "corrupted" Christianity, but this does not detract from the sympathy with the Jews and their fate to which his works testify.

In 1786 appeared his *Letters to the Jews, inviting them to an amicable discussion of the evidences of Christianity*³³; in an advertisement he declared that the *Letters* were printed chiefly to be distributed among the Jews and that he had the intention to have them translated into Hebrew "if there should appear to be any prospect of their answering the end for which they were composed"³⁴. Priestley evidently hoped, and possibly even expected, that a Unitarian presentation of Christianity would bridge the gap between Jews and Christians by taking away the theological stumbling-blocks which prevented the Jews from accepting Christ as the promised Messiah:

Your dislike of *Christians*, and your abhorrence of their faith, is not to be wondered at, when it is considered how much you have suffered by their cruel oppressions, and how contrary their doctrines have been to the fundamental principles of your religion. You are the worshippers of the one living and true God. But, besides him, the generality of Christians have paid divine honours to Jesus Christ, and in a great measure also to those dead men whom they have called *saints*, who were no more the proper objects of worship than images of wood and stone, the work of men's hands. But at this day the cruel usage you have met with from Christian nations is happily much abated. Christians in general, and especially more civilized among them, are disposed to treat you with equity and humanity; and if you *now* make inquiry into their faith, you will find that many of them have rejected, as abuses and corruptions of it, those doctrines which you so justly abhor.

³¹ *Works*, ix. 59f., 117f., 257f., 292, 364ff., 462ff., 580ff.

³² *Discourses on the Evidence of Revealed Religion* (1794), Disc. VIII (On the Prophecies concerning the Dispersion and Restoration of the Jews): *Works*, xv. 298.

³³ The title is reminiscent of that of Philippus van Limborch's *De veritate religionis christianae amica collatio cum erudito Judaeo*, Goudae 1687, which Priestley had read (*Works*, xx. 243), and there is a certain parallel between Van Limborch and Priestley in their juxtaposition of the miracles of Moses and those of Christ as proof of their "missio divina" (*De Veritate*, p. 152). For the latter point, see P.T. van Rooden & J.W. Wesselius, "The Early Enlightenment and Judaism . . .", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, xxi (1987), 146 (with thanks to Dr. Van Rooden).

³⁴ *Works*, xx. 227. A learned Jew in Birmingham had promised to do the translation: Priestley to T. Lindsey, 14 July 1786: *Works*, i. 395. In the editor's footnote there is confusion between the *Letters* and the "Address" of 1791.

With regard to the rejection of "corruptions" Priestley saw a parallel between Jews and Christians: while God in the course of his providence had entirely cured the Jews of the least propensity to idolatry, in like manner he was now opening the eyes of the Christians to bring them back to the worship of himself alone. For Priestley, Unitarianism implied a shedding of the influence of Platonic philosophy which had led to the doctrine of the Trinity and its "idolatrous" consequences; to a large extent, it was a return of Christianity, for so long contaminated and corrupted by Greek thinking, to its Jewish background.

At the same time, however, he stated (though with reluctance) that in these present times the Jews lived under the cloud of God's displeasure: they had accepted the divine mission of Moses, but they rejected the divine mission of Jesus, the suffering Messiah. He emphasized that an acceptance of the divine mission of Jesus did not stand in the way of the messianic expectations of the Jews. In this context, he distinguished between the suffering Messiah, announced by the prophets, and the prince of the house of David, under whom the Jews would enjoy the great prosperity, promised to them in the latter days: "All the temporal glory that you expect, will certainly be your lot; and the *Messiah* that you look for will come"³⁵. He had already elaborated this point in an article in the *Theological Repository*: "Observations on the Prophecies relating to the Messiah, and the future Glory of the House of David"³⁶. There, he had distinguished between two personages: the Messiah, foretold by the Prophets, and the prince under whom in the future the Israelites would enjoy their great prosperity. None of the Prophets had ever called this prince the Messiah, but only David, or a branch from the stock of David. The two personages had been confounded by "Christian critics, from the age of the apostles to the present day", but the Jews, too, had confounded the character of the Messiah with that of "the future restorer of their nation"³⁷.

Priestley expected that the glorious future of the Jews in their own country would be accompanied by their conversion to Christianity. This did not imply, however, that the Jews had to join one of the Christian churches. "On the contrary, since you are still to be distinguished as *Jews*, no less than as *Christians*, it will be more convenient for you to form a separate church, and to keep your sabbath as you now do"³⁸. With regard to the latter point, the continuation of Mosaic law after the resto-

³⁵ *Works*, xx. 228, 243.

³⁶ Pamphilus (= Priestley) in: *Theol. Repos.*, v (1786); *Works*, xii. 411-442.

³⁷ *Works*, xii. 440f.

³⁸ *Works*, xx. 245.

ration of the Jews to their own country, Priestley had been more explicit in the *Theological Repository* of 1786³⁹. Not only the keeping of the sabbath, but also holy feasts (Priestley mentions Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles), sacrifices, circumcision – it should all be continued (though perhaps with “favorable alterations”, made in Mosaic ritual by divine authority) after the restoration of the Jews to their own country and after their concomitant conversion to Christianity. Priestley was aware of the fact that this seemed to be contradictory to Paul’s teaching with regard to the Jewish law, but it was merely a seeming contradiction: Paul only wanted to safeguard the freedom of the gentiles with regard to Jewish ritual. As a critical theologian, Priestley felt free to remark that not all the expressions of the apostle were sufficiently guarded, and that his reasoning was sometimes hasty and inconclusive. Nowhere, however, had Paul explicitly stated that Mosaic ritual was no longer binding for Jewish Christians. In this context, Priestley even went so far as to state that after the return and the conversion of the Jews “the service of the Temple will be resumed, and be perpetual; and that the Gentiles will join in some parts of it, though they will not be circumcised, or conform to the whole law, as Jews”⁴⁰.

As appears from a postscript to his *Letters*, Priestley did not foster the illusion that his tract would “of itself” make any of the Jews convert to Christianity: “Your conversion must be the result of your own diligent study and impartial inquiry”⁴¹. The main purpose of his *Letters* was to emphasize that if the Jews accepted the historical evidence for the miracles of Moses, they should *a fortiori* accept the historical evidence for the miracles of Christ, “because the history of his miracles is more within the limits of certain history”. This, in its turn, could lead to a recognition of the divine mission of Christ as well as of that of Moses.

Diligently, then, compare the historical evidence of the two religions. Both, you will find, are, in reality, but one. They are perfectly consistent with, nay, they imply each other, and must stand or fall together⁴².

³⁹ Hermas (= Priestley), “Of the Perpetuity of the Jewish Ritual”, *Theol. Repos.*, v (1786); *Works*, xii. 442-482.

⁴⁰ *Works*, xii. 481. For the occurrence of the idea of the restoration of Jewish ritual, including the worship in the Temple, with seventeenth-century millenarians, see E.G.E. van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en zijn wereld* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 375-384.

⁴¹ Cf. what he wrote to Joshua Tolmin, 6 October 1786: “I am glad that my ‘History’ [*An History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*] and ‘Letters to the Jews’ have given you any satisfaction. I find they are much noticed by that people in this country, but I do not expect to make any converts soon; their prejudices against Christianity are deep-rooted”: *Works*, i. 1, 396.

⁴² *Works*, xx. 250.

Soon, however, it appeared that Priestley's *Letters* did not answer the end for which they were composed. In 1787, the learned Jewish scholar and controversialist David Levi published a spirited reply to Priestley's *Letters*⁴³. Apparently, on the side of the Jewish community in England there had been some hesitation to enter the lists against Priestley. With the Jewish leaders there was some fear that engaging in religious disputes "might be construed as reflecting on, or tending towards disturbing the national religion, as by law established", while thereabove "the generality of our learned men being foreigners, are deficient in the proper idiom and phraseology of the English language". Levi, however, considered the first argument groundless, "thanks to God, the Reformation, and glorious Revolution". Besides, "we live in an enlightened age, in which the investigation of theological points is accounted laudable". The second argument was of greater weight; Levi saw himself as David fighting against a Goliath who came with the sword of elegance of diction, the spear of criticism and the shield of sophistry. But like his great namesake, David Levi hit his opponent in his most sensitive spot, i.e., his Unitarian conviction. While Priestley supposed that his rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity would make him an acceptable partner in a Jewish-Christian discussion, Levi attacked him exactly on this point: "permit me, Sir, to ask you, whether you sincerely intend, in this discussion, to defend Christianity?". To Levi it was incomprehensible how a man who rejected the miraculous conception of Jesus could be entitled to the appellation of a Christian in the strict sense of the word⁴⁴:

Whether the generality of Christians have just reason to pay divine honours to Jesus, or not, as you observe . . . is not my business at present to inquire, but ought to be settled among Christians themselves; and that, (if I may presume to give my opinion in so weighty a cause) before you attempted to convert the Jews to Christianity. For do but figure to yourself, dear Sir, how ridiculous it must appear, for you to invite the Jews to embrace, what you yourselves do not rightly understand. This, is such an absurdity, that I am surprised and astonished, when I reflect, how it was possible that a

⁴³ *Letters to Dr. Priestly* [sic] in answer to those he addressed to the Jews (London, 1787): a second edition, with different page-numbering but for the rest identical, appeared in the same year. For Levi, see *DNB*; *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (with different dates of birth and death); T.M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714-1830* (Philadelphia, 1979), esp. p. 263. Levi, who moved in English literary circles, had a good command of the English language (though not an elegant style) and was also (perhaps partly thanks to his friend Henry Lemoine) well versed in English theology. Apparently, Priestley did not expect a reply from this side; on 23 October 1786 he wrote to C. Rotheran: "I do not find that any Jews in England will reply to my letters to them; but they say I shall probably have an answer from a Jew at Vienna": *Works*, i. 1, 397.

⁴⁴ Levi, *Letters*, pp. 4-9.

Divine and a Philosopher, of your distinguished rank, in the republic of letters, should overlook⁴⁵.

Furthermore, Levi also attacked the main argument of Priestley's *Letters*: the miracles of Jesus as a proof of his divine mission. For Levi it was manifest "that miracles *only* were not sufficient to establish a firm belief in the divine mission of Moses; much less can those of Jesus, and which you freely acknowledge, cannot vie with those recorded of Moses, in point of *magnitude and splendor*, be thought so"⁴⁶. And reflecting upon a sentence in Priestley's *Letters* which began with the words: "Had Jesus been that impostor . . .", Levi remarked that according to Priestley's hypothesis Jesus indeed must be that impostor. In this context he quoted Josiah Tucker, the moderately orthodox Dean of Gloucester, known among other things for his plea for the naturalization of the Jews, who in his *Brief and Dispassionate View of the Difficulties attending the Trinitarian, Arian and Socinian Theories* (1774) had written that Jesus was either "that great I AM which had an existence, not only before Abraham, but before the world began, or else he must have been one of the falsest and the vilest of the human race"⁴⁷.

Offended at the tone of Levi's attack, Priestley reacted in a second set of *Letters to the Jews* (1787), not directed to Levi personally but to the Jews in general⁴⁸. It was, of course, Levi's assertion that Priestley was not entitled to the appellation of a Christian which had hurt him most of all: "You must be ashamed that one of your body should have begun this important discussion in a manner so unworthy of you. To make any reply to such a calumny would answer no purpose"⁴⁹. Again he emphasized "the proper, that is the historical evidence of Christianity", which attested to the great and leading facts in the Gospel history, the account of the doctrines, the miracles, the death and resurrection of Christ. In this context, he strongly denied that the disbelief in the miraculous con-

⁴⁵ Levi, *Letters*, p. 29.

⁴⁶ Levi, *Letters*, pp. 71f. Rather incautiously, Priestley had written that, though none of the miracles of Christ can be said to vie with some of those recorded by Moses in point of splendor and magnitude, yet with respect to notoriety and frequency they were abundantly to show that there could be no trick or collusion in the case: *Works*, xx. 237.

⁴⁷ Levi, *Letters*, p. 89. For Tucker, see Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 37f.

⁴⁸ On 11 June 1787 he wrote to Theophilus Lindsey: "I have received David Levi's Letters. They are below my expectation; so much so, that I hardly think it will be worth while to reply to them; but give notice that I hope to receive something more to the purpose. I shall draw up something . . .". Lindsey thought Levi's letters "a very indifferent performance", but (as he wrote on 7 July to a correspondent) "One is glad . . . that real Jews answer, as that may bring them in by degrees to the discussion of the question": *Works*, i. 1, 410.

⁴⁹ *Works*, xx. 252.

ception would draw after it the disbelief of the whole Gospel history, and he repeated what he had said before: the story of the miraculous conception had not the testimony of the age in which it was promulgated; it was an interpolation, and as such had no historical credibility⁵⁰. It is clear that Priestley did not reject the miraculous conception because he thought such a miracle impossible. He argues against it as a critical historian, but the implicit presupposition is of a theological nature: belief in the supernatural conception of Jesus is inextricably connected with Trinitarian doctrine, and the the main stumbling-block for the Jews to accept the messianic claims of Jesus.

After a lapse of time, David Levi replied in a second set of *Letters to . . . Priestley*⁵¹. His principal defence against Priestley's emphasis on the historical character of the miracles of Jesus was, that he did not think miracles as such a proof of a divine mission. With regard to this point, he appealed to Conyers Middleton, who in his *A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church* (1749) had shown that miracles such as Jesus performed also occurred elsewhere⁵².

The discussion between Priestley and Levi was not continued. Given the rather acrimonious nature of their discussion it is not very probable that Levi was among the group of Jews who in 1790 or 1791 heard Priestley giving a "discourse" on the resurrection of Jesus in Essex Chapel, London (Theophilus Lindsey's Unitarian chapel)⁵³ and who afterwards had "an amicable conference" with Priestley, which made him remark: "A freer intercourse with Jews and Christians would have a good effect on both"⁵⁴. In his discourse Priestley had called Christ "our Lord",

⁵⁰ *History of Early Opinions*, Book III, ch. XX: *Works*, vii. esp. 100f.; cf. Canogan, "Irony of History", p. 22.

⁵¹ D. Levi, *Letters to Dr. Priestley, in Answer to his Letters to the Jews II* (London, 1789). Levi explained the delay in answering partly from lack of time, partly from "the consternation into which the greatest part of our nation were thrown on the appearance of my reply to your first letters", p. 3. But Levi's brave opposition to Priestley also excited admiration: Endelman mentions a curious inscription on an etching, published in 1789, of a fight between a Jewish and a Christian pugilist: "The Christian pugilist", went the inscription, proved himself "as inferior to the Jewish hero as Dr. Priestley when opposed to the Rabbi [sic], David Levi": *The Jews of Georgian England*, p. 220.

⁵² Levi, *Letters*, ii. 43. For Conyers Middleton, see *DNB*; G. Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 375f. Middleton, however, had excepted (for tactical reasons?) the first century from his criticism of the credibility of miracles: "... there is no sufficient reason to believe, from the testimony of antiquity, that any miraculous powers did ever actually subsist in any age of the Church, after the times of the Apostles": *Free Inquiry* (3rd edn, London, 1749), p. xci.

⁵³ In 1799, however, he mentioned Levi as "a person whom I well know and respect": "Address to the Jews", *Works*, xx. 299.

⁵⁴ First published in 1791; later in *Discourses on the Evidence of Divine Revelation* (1794): *Works*, xv. 325-348.

which apparently had offended some of his Jewish hearers. Because of this, Priestley prefixed an "Address to the Jews" to the first edition of the discourse⁵⁵. In this "Address" he again made clear his Unitarian position. Jesus was "as one of your nation, a humble worshipper of the God of your fathers, and he instructed his followers to worship no other than him. These Christians are called *Unitarians* ...". Perhaps reflecting upon a rather minimalizing remark by Levi on the Unitarians – "your sect, (which are but a handful)"⁵⁶ – Priestley stated that things were ripening apace for a general declaration in favor of Unitarianism. This would mean that the "great abomination" of "the idolatrous worship of Jesus Christ" would be removed. Then Christianity would resume its "pristine vigour" and enlighten and bless the whole world, and "the unspeakable obligations we are under to you will be repaid by our services, in you conversion to Christianity".

Priestley's last address to the Jews was written in America in 1799 and published as an appendix to his *Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other ancient nations* (1799)⁵⁷. As the full title: "An Address to the Jews on the present state of the World and the Prophecies relating to it" indicates, the main emphasis of this address was eschatological. In Priestley's thinking, apocalyptic speculation took a prominent place. Like so many English theologians, he was a millenarian in the tradition of Joseph Mede, whose *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1627) made millenarianism in England respectable⁵⁸, though (as we shall see) he did not follow Mede in all respects. His millenarianism had a traditional aspect, embedded as it was in a theological thinking which, however innovating and unorthodox, had retained a number of elements from the background in which he had been reared. Neither his Unitarian theology nor his philosophical materialism or his scientific interests implied a positivist outlook. In many ways a rationalist, he was at the same time a man of deeply rooted religious convictions. He believed in the reality of miracles, in the resurrection of Jesus, in the fulfilment of prophecy, and his critical method did not prevent him from accepting many of the biblical records as to a large degree historically trustworthy. During his visit to Paris in 1774 he astonished his agnostic hosts because he "chose on all occasions to appear as a Christian"⁵⁹. But they will also have noticed

⁵⁵ *Works*, xx. 275-280. For Priestley's account of the "amicable conference", see 275n.

⁵⁶ Levi, *Letters*, p. 77.

⁵⁷ The "Address" is printed separately in *Works*, xx. 281-300.

⁵⁸ For Mede's millenarian views, see, e.g., R.H. Popkin, "The Third Force in 17th Century Philosophy", *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, iii (1983), 35-63.

⁵⁹ *Autobiography*, p. 111.

that his Christianity was of a special brand, marked as it was by the optimism of his age with regard to the future development of mankind.

With Priestley (as with most millenarians) we should not make a sharp distinction between a "pessimistic" millenarianism which emphasizes the dramatic effects of God's judgments and a more "optimistic" millenarian expectation in which the joyful character of the glorious time to come is dominant; in Priestley's millenarianism, both elements are present, though with him the mixture is different from that which colored the eschatology of former millenarians. Nor should we see a contrast between the religious and the political elements in his millenarianism. Garrett rightly points out that Priestley's millenarian ideas were far more respectable and conventional than some of his other opinions and that his acceptance of the ideology of the French Revolution had the effect of intensifying his millenarianism: "It is thus impossible to separate his political opinions from his religious convictions"⁶⁰. Rather than seeing a contrast between the two elements we might (with Fruchtman) express the relations between them in the categories of "interaction" and "interdependence"⁶¹. Priestley's progressive views colored and sometimes transformed, but never effaced the traditional pattern of his eschatology.

In the third part of his *Institutes*, which appeared in 1774, Priestley gave a clear exposition of his millenarian expectations. Some of his sources are explicitly mentioned. Of course he had read Joseph Mede; furthermore, Daniel Whitby and Bishop Thomas Newton⁶²; and last but not least the philosopher David Hartley⁶³. For Hartley he had a deep admiration: "Next to the Bible, *Hartley's* 'Observation [sic] on Man' is the book that I have recourse to, when I would read to do my heart good"⁶⁴. Hartley saw "the present Circumstances of the World" as "extraordinary and critical, beyond what has ever yet happened". He thought it probable that all the "present Civil Governments" would be dissolved

⁶⁰ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, p. 133.

⁶¹ Fruchtman, *Apocalyptic Politics*, pp. 2ff.: for a supposed contrast between "optimistic" and "pessimistic" elements, see pp. 38ff.

⁶² *Works*, ii. 365ff. Whitby, an Anglican theologian with Unitarian tendencies, published in 1703 a *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament*; between 1754 and 1758, Bishop Newton published his (at that time apparently rather popular) *Dissertations on the Prophecies which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world* (3 vols.).

⁶³ *Works*, ii. 370. At the time when Priestley wrote his *Institutes*, his friend Richard Price had already given evidence of an inclination towards millennial thinking in his discourse on Providence (in *Four Dissertations*, [London, 1767]). His utterances on this point, however, were at that time still vague and uncertain. I consulted the Dutch translation: *Vier Verhandelingen* (Harlingen, 1768), pp. 95f.

⁶⁴ "Letter to the Rev. Mr. Venn" (1769), *Works*, xxi. 339. In 1775, Priestley edited a new, shortened edition of Hartley's *Observations*.

and overturned because of their inherent corruptions. The same fate would befall the ecclesiastical powers of the Christian world; the Church of Rome, but also "all the rest", all those churches which have followed her example. When, however, by great tribulations the Christian Church would have recovered from her corruptions, true and pure religion (called "the Kingdom of Righteousness, of the Saints, the New Jerusalem, etc.") would finally be established. In these events, the Jewish people would play a special part:

As the Downfal of the *Jewish State* under *Titus* was the Occasion of the Publication of the Gospel to us Gentiles, so our Downfal may contribute to the Restoration of the *Jews*, and both together bring on the final Publication of true Religion⁶⁵.

All this found an echo in Priestley's *Institutes*⁶⁶. Calamitous events, represented in the Book of Revelation by the outpouring of the seven vials, would lead to a fundamental change in the ecclesiastical and political situation of the world. Antichrist (by Priestley virtually identified with the Church of Rome) would be destroyed⁶⁷, together with the Turkish power, "which has so long been in possession of the Holy Land"⁶⁸, and "the forms of government ecclesiastical and civil, which now subsist in Europe" would be dissolved. Something, "more favourable to the virtue and happiness of mankind" would take their place.

The present kingdoms of Europe are unquestionably represented by the feet and toes of the great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his political dream: and upon the feet of this image will fall the stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, which represents the kingdom to be set up by Christ.

Thus far, Priestley's views more or less fit into the conventional millenarian scheme. Contrary to traditional millenarians such as Mede and Bish-

⁶⁵ D. Hartley, *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (London, 1749: facs. edn, Gainesville, Florida, 1966) ii. 455, 361, 370, 156, 375.

⁶⁶ In his introduction to Priestley's autobiography, Jack Lindsay poses a close connection between Hartley's principle of "the association of ideas", which resulted in an optimistic belief in the progressive development of mankind, and Priestley's millenarianism: "The notion of the Second Coming and the Millenary Rule of the Saints is secularised into that of human perfectibility brought about by the providential workings of the Association Principle" (*Autobiography*, p. 37). No doubt there was influence: we may assume that Hartley's philosophy strengthened the optimistic trend in Priestley's eschatology, but this does not imply a total "secularization" of Priestley's millenarianism. The religious impetus remained a vital element in his apocalyptic expectations.

⁶⁷ Priestley does not mention explicitly "all the rest" of the Christian churches, as Hartley had done, though from the sequel of his exposition it is clear that on this point also there is no real difference between his views and those of Hartley.

⁶⁸ In this context, Priestley refers to the outpouring of the seventh vial (Rev. 16:17) and to Daniel 11:40-45, 12:1.

op Newton, however, he rejected with Whitby a literal interpretation of the millennium. Christ himself will not reign in person upon earth, nor will the martyrs actually rise from the dead and live with him: "considering the figurative language of prophecy, it is more probable, that the revival of the *cause* for which they suffered is, in reality, the thing denoted by it". No more should the term of a thousand years be taken literally: that would be much too short for mankind to reach its "mature state". Lastly, after the millennium there will be "another prevalence of infidelity and wickedness, which will bring on the last crisis and final dissolution of the world", followed (in prophetic description) by "a new heaven and a new earth"⁶⁹.

In Priestley's expositions on the millennium, as given in his *Institutes*, the political ferment is already present. He wrote this work on the eve of the American Revolution. From a letter to Lindsey (23 August 1771) it appears that he thought the "dismal catastrophe", predicted by Hartley, to be near at hand: "I shall be looking for the downfall of Church and State together. I am really expecting some very calamitous, but finally glorious events"⁷⁰. The French Revolution, with which he sympathized – his radical views triggered off the well-known "Birmingham riots" and ultimately led to his emigration to the United States in 1794⁷¹ – gave a new impetus to his millenarian ideals. After his arrival in America he told John Adams that the French Revolution was opening a new era in the world and presented a near view of the millennium⁷². In 1797 he believed that the temporal power was at an end, and that this would be followed by other great changes in the state of Europe and the world at large. "All Christians, however, will look forward with joy to the bright close of the calamities that will accompany these events"⁷³. As Anne Holt remarks, he read the news-sheets of the day with the Book of Daniel open before him⁷⁴. He derived "a noble consolation . . . from the prophecies of scripture"⁷⁵, though the interpretation of prophecy sometimes confronted him with difficulties. "I am persuaded, however, that

⁶⁹ *Works*, ii. 364-371. For his "figurative" interpretations of the words "new heaven and new earth", and his rejection of the idea of a "conflagration", see his Notes on II Peter 3: *Works*, xiv. 419.

⁷⁰ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, p. 130, with references to *Works*, i. 1, 146.

⁷¹ For this, see Holt, *Life*, pp. 145-178.

⁷² Quoted by Garrett, p. 133. Later, different views with regard to the events in France were one of the causes of an estrangement between Priestley and Adams: "I suppose, too, he was not pleased that I did not adopt his dislike of the French", Priestley to Rev. T. Belsham, 11 January 1798: *Works*, i. 2, 391.

⁷³ Priestley to Mr. Russell, 19 April 1797: *Works*, i. 2, 377.

⁷⁴ Holt, *Life*, p. 207.

⁷⁵ Priestley to T. Lindsey, 27 August 1797, *Works*, i. 2, 383.

our principal difficulty arises from the uncertainty of the reading, and the difficulty of translating. If we knew what Daniel really wrote, I am persuaded we should now understand him better than he did himself"⁷⁶.

In those last years of his life, so full of personal tensions and political upheavals, he looked forward the more fervently to the daybreak of the millennium. On one point, he had changed his opinion. Under the influence of two articles, written by R.E. Garnham in the *Theological Repository* of 1786 and 1788⁷⁷, Priestley revoked his former opinion that there would be no "personal appearance of Christ upon earth" during the millennium. Now he believed that at the beginning of the millennium Christ would come "in the clouds, so as to be seen by all", then to return to the same state in which he is at present (no doubt, on the earth), "and so continue till the general resurrection, and govern the people of Israel, and the world, as the Hebrew nation were directed by the *Shekinah*"⁷⁸. But was the time of Christ's coming really near? He believed it, and still was hesitant. The fulfilment of the most important prophecies is, no doubt, at hand:

and yet a good many years may intervene before the scene of calamity is passed. I fully expect the personal appearance of Jesus . . . ; but this will hardly be before the restoration of the Jews, of which there are no symptoms at present. The Turkish empire must fall, before that event, and the neighbouring powers do not seem to be disposed to meddle with it. But, great changes in the disposition of men may take place in a short time, and things least expected come to pass⁷⁹.

In all Priestley's expositions on the millennium, the idea of the restoration of the Jews takes a central place. In the *Institutes* he states that according to many Old Testament prophecies the Jews shall return to their own country, and shall possess it many years in peace. It will be a return of the Ten Tribes as well as of Judah: "this nation is still to be distinguished by God, and to be the medium of his communications to the rest of the world"⁸⁰. The theme returns time and again. It gave a special color to the *Letters to the Jews*. It was elaborated in the discourse "Of the Prophecies concerning the Dispersion and Restoration of the Jews", in which he assigned to the Jews a dominant role in the renewal of the world: "by means of this one chosen nation, all mankind are to be brought to the knowledge, worship and obedience of the true one God"⁸¹. But nowhere

⁷⁶ Priestley to T. Lindsey, 16 November 1797, *Works*, i. 2, 388.

⁷⁷ For this, see Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 131ff.

⁷⁸ *Notes on all the Books of Scripture*, iv (1804); *Works*, xiv. esp. 505.

⁷⁹ Priestley to T. Belsham, 5 June 1798: *Works*, i. 2, 401.

⁸⁰ *Works*, ii. 368.

⁸¹ *Discourses on the Evidence of Revealed Religion* (1794): *Works*, xv. 297.

did he express it more forcefully than in his "Address to the Jews" of 1799, written (as he remarks in the opening sentence) by "a Christian who from his early years has entertained the greatest respect and veneration for your nation".

Writing for Jews, Priestley did not refer to the Book of Revelation, but to the Old Testament prophets, and in particular to the prophecies of Daniel, in which (as we have seen) at that time he was deeply immersed. Many prophets had enlarged, said Priestley, on the restoration and future glory of the Jews, but "Daniel, who barely mentions your restoration, gives several notes of the time". Three nearly coincident events had to take place before the glorious time: the breaking up of the present European monarchies, the extinction of the Papal power and the overthrow of the Turkish empire. For Priestley, history was demonstrating the truth of prophecy. No one could have confidence in the permanence of the monarchies of Europe, who considered what had happened in France. A still more ominous event (though it passed with little notice) was the fall of the Papal power. The Turkish empire was already on the verge of destruction; Palestine, now part of the Turkish empire, almost uninhabited, wholly uncultivated, empty, was ready to receive the Jews. But at the same time he cautioned the Jews not to be too sanguine. "When I say at hand, I do not mean this year or the next, or the next twenty or thirty years: for what are twenty or thirty years to the duration of your sufferings, and especially to that of your future prosperity?"

Priestley expected that the return of the Jews would be followed by a complete restoration, which would entail the acknowledgment that Jesus was a true prophet and that it was a great sin to put him to death. This conviction would be produced by his personal appearance at the beginning of the millennium. Conversion to Christianity (by which he meant, of course, to true, uncorrupted Unitarian Christianity) would not imply, however, a denial of the truth of Jewish religion. On the contrary: "Your restoration cannot fail to convince the world of the truth of your religion; and in those circumstances your conversion to Christianity cannot fail to draw after it that of the whole world"⁸².

In his utterances on the Jews, various strands of his theology come together. A philo-Semitic trend is clearly recognizable. If his remark with regard for the veneration he had for the Jews "from his early years" is not a retroprojection, his philo-Semitic sympathies preceded his transition to Unitarianism, though once he was a convinced Unitarian his rejection of Trinitarian thinking no doubt reinforced his respect for his "brethren in the belief in the unity of God". And, of course, his radical

⁸² *Works*, xx. 281-300.

rejection of all Greek accretions in Christian theology considerably contributed to his Judeo-Christian orientation. His image of Jewish religion was to a large degree modelled upon the Old Testament, interpreted in eighteenth-century categories. He was, however, not quite unacquainted with later Jewish theology⁸³. There were also some personal contacts with – probably more or less Enlightened – Jews, but there are no grounds to suppose that these contacts had a deep or intensive character.

His millenarianism had various aspects. Fundamentally it was traditional, and as such already contained a philo-Semitic tendency: all millenarians who stood in the tradition of Mede saw the restoration and conversion of the Jews as a constituent part of the apocalyptic scenario. Furthermore, in the context of his apologetic theology, in which the fulfilment of prophecy belonged to the “evidences of revealed religion”⁸⁴, contemporary events functioned as a verification of the prophecies with regard to the approach of the millennium; in fact a vicious circle, which is the weak spot of most millenarian conceptions. The news-sheets were read in the light of Daniel, the prophecies were interpreted by means of the news-sheet. But of this Priestley was not aware: in this clear and rational thinker there was an element of almost enthusiastic optimism, which made him look forward with eager expectancy to the great events of the future. An underlying assumption in all this is that these events not only entailed a revolutionary renovation of society, but also a return of Christian religion to its pristine Unitarian purity. In this renewal of religion the converted Jews – believers in the unity of God and in the messianic character of Jesus – would have a central function. This expectation could make him approach the Jews as “a Christian, who reverences your nation, is a believer in the future glory of it, and is a worshipper of the God of your fathers, without admitting any other to share in the rights of divinity with him”⁸⁵.

⁸³ See, e.g., his quotations from Jewish scholars in *History of Early Opinions*, *Works*, vi. 384ff.; vii. 282ff.

⁸⁴ *Institutes*, part I, ch. III: *Works*, ii. 170-190.

⁸⁵ In the opening sentence of the first *Letters to the Jews*: *Works*, xx. 227.

SOCIAL THEORY AND GOTHIC HORROR IN THE WRITINGS OF SIMON-NICOLAS-HENRI LINGUET

JEREMY D. POPKIN

In his work on the history of ideas, Richard Popkin has often shown us how much we have to learn from thinkers of the past whose views were condemned in their own day as bizarre or incomprehensible. By paying close attention to the arguments of sceptics, fideists, and millenarians, we can learn much about the development of the modern mind and about the issues that truly concerned our intellectual ancestors. Somehow my father, in his many explorations of the margins of eighteenth-century thought, has managed to avoid stumbling across the works of Simon-Henri-Nicolas Linguet, a man who chose the high point of the age of Enlightenment to argue that slavery was more humane than freedom, despotism preferable to liberty, and wheaten bread the cause of the decline of western civilization. Linguet was certainly more of an iconoclast than a sceptic: he rejected the conventional wisdom of his times, but was dogmatically certain of the truth of his own counter-propositions. But this quirky and quarrelsome opponent of the *philosophes* clearly belongs in the company of those neglected and rejected thinkers to whom my father has devoted so much of his own research.

In recent scholarship, Linguet (1736-1794) has increasingly been recognized as one of the most radical and original social thinkers of the eighteenth century. Darline Gay Levy's thoroughly documented study has provided both a detailed account of Linguet's life as a writer, lawyer and polemicist and an overview of his critique of liberal political and economic dogmas¹. Rudolf Thamer has demonstrated his contribution to the criticism of capitalist economic relations, which made Karl Marx recognize him as a predecessor². Linguet was among the creators of modern political journalism, and he was certainly among the most widely read authors of the last decades of the Old Regime³.

¹ Darline Gay Levy, *The Ideas and Careers of Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet* (Urbana, Ill., 1980). Another good recent biographical study is Ginevra Conti Odorisio, *S.N.H. Linguet dall'Ancien Régime alla Rivoluzione* (Rome, 1976).

² Hans-Ulrich Thamer, *Revolution und Reaktion in der französischen Sozialkritik des 18. Jahrhunderts: Linguet, Mably, Babeuf* (Frankfurt, 1973).

³ Jeremy D. Popkin, "The Prerevolutionary Origins of Political Journalism", in *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, ed. Keith Baker (Oxford, 1987), pp. 216-220, and

It was not merely the content of his works that accounted for Linguet's impact during the eighteenth century, however. Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that the numerous readers who digested his polemics against Montesquieu's constitutionalism came away convinced of the virtues of despotism, and even less to show that Linguet's diatribes against the social and medical evils of eating bread converted his audience to a diet of rice. One can hardly doubt that contemporary readers appreciated Linguet above all because of his dramatic and impassioned style of writing and argument. An analysis of the stylistic devices that made Linguet different from other eighteenth-century writers on social problems is an essential element in understanding his ideas and their impact.

Linguet was a consummate showman who was well aware of the importance of style in putting across unconventional ideas. His success as a lawyer in the late 1760s and early 1770s was due above all to his mastery of dramatic oratory: his public pleadings, addressed more to the audience than to the judges, became one of the best-attended shows in Paris. Opponents condemned him for deliberately creating a scandal merely to keep himself in the public eye. But there is a great significance to Linguet's sensationalistic approach to social analysis. In an age which put its faith either in the power of human reason or the goodness of the human heart, Linguet chose to make a radical assault on the belief that "everything is for the best". Conscious that he was going against the grain of his age, Linguet put his message in a literary form that would capture his readers' attention strongly enough to force them to consider the merit of his arguments. Like the Gothic novelists of the same period, he relied on images of horror and suffering for his most forceful effects. In doing so, he not only underlined his rejection of the optimistic commonplaces of Enlightenment thought, but also foreshadowed the atmosphere of panic that was to envelop France during the revolutionary reign of terror.

A typical example of Linguet's use of horrific imagery and his deliberate manipulation of the reactions he imagined his readers having to it, as well as an interesting case of his remarkable ability to anticipate twentieth-century concerns, occurs in his discussion of efforts to make warfare more humane. Dismissing various contemporary suggestions to limit the savagery of combat, Linguet wrote, "Je vais hasarder un souhait qui paraîtra un blasphème, et qui est pourtant, dans l'état actuel de la société, le vœu le plus humain qu'un cœur sensible puisse former. Puisse-t-il se trouver, et bientôt, un chimiste qui fournisse un moyen de

"Un journaliste face au marché des périodiques à la fin du dix-huitième siècle", in *La diffusion et la lecture des périodiques de langue française sous l'ancien régime*, ed. Hans Bots (Amsterdam, 1988), pp. 11-19.

détruire, en un clin-d'oeil, une armée toute entière''. After this call for a weapon of mass destruction, Linguet suddenly turns to his readers and proclaims, "Vous frémissiez!" But, having made them tremble with terror, he calls on them to recognize that their reaction, shaped by conventional assumptions, is misguided: "ne voyez-vous pas que si jamais la guerre en était réduite à ce point, on ne la ferait plus?"⁴ And he proceeds to elaborate on the merits of what the twentieth century would come to know as the doctrine of mutual assured destruction.

When contemporaries were confronted with Linguet's style of argumentation, they had no doubt that there was something perverse about it. The abbé Morellet, a friend of Turgot's who took it upon himself in 1775 to demolish Linguet on behalf of the supporters of enlightened reform, labelled Linguet as a practitioner of the "théorie du paradoxe", a supporter of opinions "contraire à l'opinion commune et générale"⁵. According to Morellet, the power of arguments contradicting common wisdom was rooted in the psychology of the reading public: "L'homme se lasse facilement et promptement des mêmes objets . . . Ceux qui ne présentent que des vérités connues, n'attirent plus l'attention, et encore moins l'admiration des lecteurs"⁶. Morellet saw that there was a close connection between Linguet's rejection of conventional wisdom and his style of discourse. A clear, simple style would not serve the paradoxer's purposes: "Au contraire, l'incorrection, et même le mépris des lois de la grammaire, qui donnent au style l'air de la facilité; l'amas confus des métaphores et leur incohérence, qui amusent l'attention du lecteur; une vivacité soutenue dans la dispute, dût-elle passer jusqu'à la violence et aux injures . . . le mépris des lois pédantesques de la logique commune . . . Ces moyens employés avec art, doivent seconder le paradoxe, et en augmenter l'effet"⁷.

Linguet was not, of course, the only eighteenth-century writer to be charged with cultivating arguments based on paradoxes. The century's most celebrated employer of paradox was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* was the most notorious example of the impact an argument running counter to generally accepted notions could make. Linguet was heavily influenced by Rousseau. Both understood the rhetorical power of appeals to the emotions, and the value of vivid imagery as opposed to closely reasoned argument. But Linguet's prose was not simply an imitation of Rousseau's. Rousseau cultivated his readers'

⁴ Linguet, *Annales politiques, civiles et littéraires du Dix-huitième siècle*, iii. 71-72.

⁵ André Morellet, *Théorie du paradoxe* (Amsterdam, 1775), p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

more elevated emotions: he invited them to shed tears over the lovely Julie, to participate in the satisfaction of seeing the innocent Emile ready to make his way in the world, and, in his *Contrat social*, to experience the exaltation of being part of a perfect polity. Linguet, on the other hand, played on his readers' terrors and anxieties. His rhetorical practice embodied the principle enunciated in Edmund Burke's essay on the sublime, that "no passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear"⁸.

A comparison of the well-known opening of Rousseau's *Contrat social* with Linguet's version of the same theme in his major work, the *Théorie des lois civiles*, vividly demonstrates the differences in the two men's approaches. Rousseau introduces the first book of the *Contrat social* with a memorable example of his paradoxical style. "L'homme est né libre", he announces⁹. Readers, particularly those coming to Rousseau after the issuance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, are naturally led to expect this half-sentence to be followed by a conclusion drawn from the initial statement, along the lines of Article 1 of the Declaration, which reads: "Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits". Instead, Rousseau continues, "et partout il [man] est dans les fers". The "et" which joins the two clauses of the first sentence heightens the effect of the paradox. Had Rousseau connected his clauses with "mais", the reader would be alerted to the contradiction of the first clause contained in the second: instead, the reader arrives at "dans les fers" without any preparation and is forced to confront the full force of Rousseau's apparently nonsensical formulation. Rousseau's paradoxical first sentence is followed by an equally paradoxical second one: "Tel se croit le maître des autres, qui ne laisse pas d'être plus esclave qu'eux". This enigmatic assertion that an absolute ruler is in fact dependent on his subjects is scarcely developed in the further course of the book, which proceeds instead to fulfill the promise made in the second half of the paragraph: "Comment ce changement [i.e., the transformation from liberty to constraint referred to in the first sentence] s'est-il fait? Je l'ignore. Qu'est-ce qui peut le rendre légitime? Je crois pouvoir résoudre cette question". In these lines, Rousseau defines the scope of his work and introduces himself as author and source of authority, a "je" who is ignorant on certain questions but capable of answering others.

This well-known paragraph illustrates the laconic style Rousseau culti-

⁸ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. J. T. Boulton (London, 1958), p. 57.

⁹ Citations to the *Contrat social* are drawn from the text in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin, t. 3 (Paris, 1964), pp. 351ff.

vated throughout the *Contrat social*. The sentences in this paragraph are short, and the imagery, although arresting, is abstract. "Man" in the first sentence is not any specific individual, and the reference to birth is equally abstract and not intended to conjure up the image of a newborn child. Similarly, the phrase "dans les fers" does not evoke a specific fettered individual. Through the use of paradox and of laconic literary style, Rousseau forces the reader to concentrate on an apparently absurd proposition: that man is born free and yet is everywhere in chains. But the further course of the work is devoted to demonstrating that this proposition is *not* a paradox. The content of the work does not bear out the unsettling suggestion that man has been unjustifiably deprived of his natural freedom: the chains that bind him turn out to be self-imposed, and imposed for very good reasons. Rousseau is entirely serious in promising to demonstrate that the disappearance of man's natural freedom can be shown to be legitimate. In the *Contrat social*, at least, paradox is employed to unsettle the reader, to make him realize that there is an intellectual problem where he may not have suspected one, but ultimately Rousseau's paradoxical enterprise is not a subversive one: he will arrive at the reassuring conclusion that political authority can be legitimate, even if his argument will, along the way, subvert the legitimacy of many existing political institutions.

With Linguet's rewriting of Rousseau's famous passage, we enter into a different world. After a lengthy "Discours préliminaire" running over a hundred pages in the original edition and establishing the author as a quarrelsome thinker already locked in combat with a variety of named and unnamed opponents, Linguet starts from the same point as Rousseau. The opening sentence of his book reads, "La Nature crie dans tous les coeurs, elle montre à tous les yeux que les hommes naissent libres et parfaitement égaux"¹⁰. With the exception of the reference to "la Nature" and the last three words, Linguet's point is the same as that made in Rousseau's opening clause, "L'homme est né libre . . .", but the mode of expression is very different. What Rousseau says in five short words takes Linguet sixteen. Where Rousseau formulates his thought in austere, abstract terms, Linguet personifies the same idea and makes it concrete, with his mentions of "hearts" and "eyes".

In addition to these differences in style, Linguet complicates the argument about man's natural liberty by his references to nature and to equality. Rousseau's opening paragraph makes the assertion that man is born free a self-evident truth, attributed neither to the author nor to any other authority. Linguet, on the other hand, brings in "nature" as the

¹⁰ Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet, *Théorie des lois civiles* (Paris, 1984) (orig. 1767), p. 73.

authority of this contention, but without defining this ambiguous term, and he goes on in his second sentence to explain that “elle [nature] leur donne à tous indistinctement des bras pour se défendre, des sens pour prévoir les dangers, ou pour découvrir leur nourriture, des mains pour la saisir, des organes pour perpétuer leur espèce”. This brief sketch of human anatomy makes the reader aware that he is in a different world from Rousseau’s: in Linguet, everything will appear to be discussed with reference to vivid concrete images, often deliberately chosen to evoke a strong emotional response.

Indeed, although Linguet’s reference to “nature” is vague, his description of universal human attributes already conveys a definite notion of human nature. The first two human attributes mentioned, arms and senses, are described as being needed for defense against external dangers: Linguet’s universal man is free, equal, but always under threat. If he is not in danger, then he is hungry: the next two references to universal human attributes have to do with discovering and seizing food. And finally Linguet’s fearful and hungry universal man has one other concern important enough to deserve mention in the first paragraph of the *Théorie des lois civiles*: sex. Whatever Linguet’s universal man may be, he is not the undefined abstraction of Rousseau’s *Contrat social*: he is a clearly described creature of strong passions.

A few pages later, Linguet produces a lengthy elaboration on the theme of the second half of Rousseau’s original paragraph. Rousseau states that despite man’s original liberty, “partout il est dans les fers”. In Linguet’s hands, this becomes a lengthy paragraph belaboring the point that as soon as a child opens his eyes, “on le lie à cette chaîne immense qu’on appelle société”. Whereas Rousseau, in his laconic style, moves directly from the initial assertion that man is free to the apparently contradictory statement that he is everywhere in chains, Linguet insists on supplying an explanation for the transition. He does this by converting the abstract men in Rousseau’s argument into concrete individuals with specific psychological motivations. The free-born man of Rousseau’s opening sentence becomes a real baby in his crib. Linguet seizes the opportunity to endorse Rousseau’s condemnation of swaddling, but he adds to Rousseau’s discussion of this subject in *Emile* a chilling elaboration on the motives of the adults who confine newborn babies: “du fond de son berceau où il est garrotté, ses premiers regards tombent sur des êtres semblables à lui, qui, tous chargés de fers, se félicitent de voir un compagnon prêt à partager leur esclavage”¹¹. Linguet plunges the in-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74. For Rousseau’s discussion of swaddling, see *Emile, ou de l’Education*, ed. Michel Launay (Paris, 1966), p. 43.

nocent child into a world of men who have fallen so deeply into the misery of slavery that they take positive satisfaction in seeing a new human being ready to join them. In *Emile*, Rousseau had charged that children were restrained in infancy for the convenience of their mothers and nurses, and he, like Linguet, had made a connection between infant swaddling and the restraints of adult society¹², but he had not suggested the disquieting thought that adults took positive pleasure in thus fettering their offspring.

As he follows the logic of Rousseau's argument, Linguet continually adds this dimension of morbid psychology. Like Rousseau, Linguet notes that men come to accept the restrictions of them as natural. For him, as for Rousseau, conventional education "vient étouffer la voix de la nature". But when man's reason develops, he is still capable of realizing his situation, like a man buried alive. He will inevitably make "avec amertume quelques réflexions sur ce qu'il a perdu . . .", but he will equally inevitably recognize "sa faiblesse et sa misère. Il sent la nécessité de rester dans le troupeau, s'il ne veut être dévoré par les ennemis qui l'entourent". Once again, Linguet returns to the image of a world full of nameless dangers, in which no one is safe. If only the social state offered genuine protection! But the reflective man will realize that "les bergers même, à qui la garde des brébis est confiée, sont quelquefois presque aussi redoutables pour elles que les loups dont ils doivent les défendre". However, this recognition is no counsel of revolt: "Ce malheur est sans remède, et c'est en vain qu'il tâcheroit de s'y soustraire". Even if a proud and robust individual were to escape to the wilderness, he would not escape: "Il y serait bientôt poursuivi par ses semblables mêmes qui se font un jeu d'en aller massacrer les habitants"¹³.

The emphasis on cruelty and horror which characterizes Linguet's rewriting of Rousseau is typical of his style of discourse. At every step in his arguments, he chooses concrete imagery over abstractions, and images of violence over those of peace. In his refutation of the notion that society is the result of a voluntary contract, for example, Linguet adopts the point of view that organized society is the result of conquest. In itself, this view was not totally alien to eighteenth-century French thought: Linguet simply universalized the common assertion that French society resulted from the Frankish conquest of Roman Gaul, familiar from the works of Boulainvilliers and Montesquieu¹⁴. But these writers, concerned to legitimize the privileges of the French aristocracy as an integral

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.

¹³ Linguet, *Lois civiles*, pp. 75-77.

¹⁴ I owe this insight to a comment of Dale Van Kley.

part of a harmonious national community, glossed over the violence inherent in this process as much as possible. Montesquieu, in his description of the Frankish conquest, admitted that "lorsque les Francs, les Bourguignons et les Goths faisaient leurs invasions, ils prenaient l'or, l'argent, les meubles, les vêtements, les hommes, les femmes". But he hastened to add, "le corps entier de l'histoire prouve qu'après le premier établissement, c'est-à-dire les premiers ravages, il reçurent à composition les habitants, et leur laisserent tous leurs droits politiques et civils"¹⁵. Montesquieu's phrasing is calculated to diminish the emotional impact of the events he is referring to. He does not gloss over the horrors of the initial barbarian invasions, but he has no desire to dwell on them; for him, they constitute a momentary exception to the general course of history, which, he hastens to assure his reader, is primarily a story of cooperation and mutual understanding among men.

In Linguet's hands, the barbarian conquest takes on quite a different air. He imagines a band of hungry hunters descending on the flocks of peaceful shepherds living in a harmonious state of nature, and then realizing that they could subject the pastoralists to themselves in perpetuity. As in his elaboration on the opening passage of Rousseau's *Contrat social*, we find Linguet constructing an internal psychology for the anonymous actors in Montesquieu's scene of conquest. The hunters, "en dévorant leur proie, les lèvres et les mains encore teintes de sang, en portant à leur bouche ces entrailles palpitantes, . . . vinrent à réfléchir sur l'agrément qu'il y aurait à trouver tous les jours une subsistance aussi commode". Consequently, they enslave the agricultural population whose flocks they had plundered, creating the first organized societies with formal laws. Linguet concludes, "La première apparence de société qui se forma sur la terre, y fit voir le despotisme et la bassesse, des maîtres impérieux et un esclave tremblant"¹⁶. Montesquieu moved quickly to show that custom had softened the initially harsh relations between rulers and subjects; Linguet dwelled at length on the bloody carnage of the initial conquest in order to suggest that the same relations of force governed the society of his own day.

For a final example of Linguet's method of eliciting readers' responses by playing on deep-seated fears, we can turn to his famous polemic against wheat and bread. That the eighteenth-century French population had a deep-rooted set of fears and anxieties associated with this basic element of its food supply is well known¹⁷. But for a writer to maintain that

¹⁵ Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, Book XXX, ch. 11.

¹⁶ Linguet, *Théorie des lois civiles*, pp. 145-146.

¹⁷ See Steven L. Kaplan, *Le Complot de famine: histoire d'une rumeur au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1982).

the basis of the eighteenth-century French diet was an inherently unhealthy substance whose raising condemned the majority of the population to servile status and perpetual fear of famine went beyond the normal concerns about shortages and the ravages of speculators. To make his readers go beyond the normal limits of their thoughts on the subject, Linguet once again hammered home his argument with the most lurid illustrations possible. Many opponents of the Physiocrats' program for free trade in grain had denounced the speculators who, they charged, would hoard supplies to drive prices up. But none had penned a passage like Linguet's description of a grain merchant hiding in his storage shed, "pâle, inquiète, tourmentée de ses remords plus encore que de ses désirs, couchée sur ces sacs qu'elle s'est flattée de métamorphoser en or, et interdite à l'aspect du jour qui pénètre dans son asyle". Here one can recognize themes familiar from anti-Jewish hate propaganda, and, like the anti-Semites, Linguet went beyond description to urge immediate, violent action: "Marchez, pères du peuple, protecteurs du pauvre. Combattez le monstre, arrachez-lui sa proie. Ne soyez pas émus des hurlements qu'il jette à l'instant où la main de la justice la saisit"¹⁸. We are obviously close to the rhetoric of the violent stages of the French Revolution, often deployed in response to exactly those fears of famine that Linguet played on in his attack on bread¹⁹.

These few examples suggest the way in which Linguet's distinctive use of language broke the bounds of accepted discourse in the eighteenth century. The substance of Linguet's arguments was rarely original; what was unique to him was his manner of expressing them, so that an observation that might be passed over in another writer's text, such as Montesquieu's reference to the Frankish conquest, became magnified into a melodramatic scene of horror that was bound to lodge in a reader's mind. Determined to demolish the conventional wisdom of the Enlightenment, according to which reason would lead men to the creation of a basically humane social order if only the obstacles of religious prejudice and outmoded political tradition could be removed, Linguet found his means in the adoption of language and techniques that would produce such a strong emotional reaction in his readers that they would be forced to shed the beliefs they had held out of habit. Although Linguet does not refer to Edmund Burke's essay, his style indicates that he understood the persuasive value of putting his readers in "that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the

¹⁸ Linguet, *Du pain et du bled* (London, 1774), p. 76.

¹⁹ See Richard Cobb, *The Police and the People* (Oxford, 1972), esp. pp. 278-284.

mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it''²⁰.

The origins of Linguet's vision of the world as a realm of horror and violence are complex. Linguet himself recognized the similarity between his thought and that of Thomas Hobbes, although he tried to separate himself from the controversies that surrounded Hobbes's thought with the disingenuous disclaimer, "On prétend qu'il en tire des conséquences dangereuses. En ce cas je les désavoue"²¹. He referred also to the Christian tradition of the fall, which he asserted explained without a doubt how men, naturally destined for freedom, had come to be enslaved. "La religion lève tous nos doutes à cet égard. Elle nous épargne des erreurs en nous interdisant les recherches. L'homme après une courte jouissance des prérogatives pour lesquelles il étoit né, les a perdues par sa faute". This ostentatious appeal to the orthodox Christian doctrine of man's fall was one of Linguet's typical argumentative strategies: in contrast to the *philosophes*, he insisted that even in his most provocative arguments, he was doing no more than stating the implications of orthodox religious and political doctrines. In his response to Morellet's *Théorie du paradoxe*, Linguet had been at pains to point out that he had never published an anonymous work or one not approved by the French royal censors²². That he had already departed from religious tradition by attributing man's knowledge of his original freedom and equality to the voice of nature rather than to divine illumination did not bother him, and indeed the *Théorie des lois civiles* proceeds to construct a theory of society as resolutely secular as those of Rousseau and Hobbes.

Linguet's attitude toward Christian orthodoxy was in fact purely utilitarian. In a polemic against Voltaire, he took his stand on the assertion that religious beliefs were necessary to maintain social order, and that it was more practical to maintain an established faith than to replace it. "Voilà un édifice qui m'assure un abri suffisant pour tous mes besoins; seriez-vous excusable de le renverser, uniquement parce que vous pourriez en substituer un autre qui aurait le même avantage?"²³ But there was in his grim vision of humanity an element that clearly derived from Christian meditations on the depravity of fallen man. If the *philosophes* had rejected Christian teachings but retained the faith that man could be redeemed, Linguet may be said to have jettisoned orthodoxy while retaining the conviction of man's sinful nature.

²⁰ Burke, *On the Sublime*, p. 57.

²¹ Linguet, *Lois civiles*, p. 153.

²² Linguet, *Théorie du libelle, ou l'Art de calomnier avec fruit, dialogue philosophique, pour servir de supplément à la Théorie du Paradoxe* (Amsterdam, 1775), p. 65.

²³ Linguet, *Annales politiques*, x. 485.

Linguet's ideas came from the pessimistic traditions in both religious and non-religious thought. Using literary techniques that stamp him as part of the pre-romantic movement, Linguet shaped these notions into a radical critique of both the conditions of the world around him and the reforms proposed by the *philosophes*. Although he, like every author of the period, wrote for the wealthy and educated classes of European society, Linguet often showed a better sense of the reality of his poor contemporaries' lives than his opponents did. This was particularly evident in his insistence that physical subsistence, rather than civil or legal rights, remained the fundamental problem of most of mankind. True, Linguet leaped from these observations not to a doctrine of social revolution but to a message of political quietism: most of mankind lived in misery, but nothing could be done to alter this situation. This prescription of resignation contradicted the language of his writings, which cried out for violent release.

That release came in the radical phase of the French Revolution. The Jacobins of 1793-1794 echoed Linguet's argument that the rights of private property, especially property in vital commodities like grain, had to be limited by "la propriété universelle qu'a tout un peuple en corps sur le terroir qu'il occupe, et sur les fruits qui y croissent". In adopting terror as a means of ensuring compliance with their economic measures, the revolutionaries followed Linguet's explicit advice that in time of famine, the public authorities should carry out requisitions with "une rigueur inflexible", enforced by the visible threat of executions²⁴. Ironically, while adopting policies that Linguet had justified in his pre-revolutionary writings, the Jacobin authorities arrested and guillotined him for his pre-revolutionary advocacy of absolute authority: Linguet finally paid the price for the inflammatory, overblown character of his rhetoric²⁵.

The significance of Linguet's violent emotional rhetoric is not merely that it foreshadowed the mood of the French Revolution's Jacobin phase, and that scholars should look to Linguet as well as to Rousseau in seeking to understand the intellectual origins of the Terror. As we near the end of a century which has experienced horrors more apocalyptic even than those the gloomy Linguet imagined, we find ourselves continually confronted with the question of how mere words can be made adequate to the task of describing Auschwitz, the Gulag, or the consequences of a nuclear war. As Richard Popkin has pointed out in an essay on "The Tri-

²⁴ Linguet, *Du Pain*, pp. 69, 179. For parallels to Linguet's language about grain hoarders among the revolutionary *sansculottes*, see Richard Cobb, *Terreur et subsistances* (Paris, 1966), p. 28.

²⁵ Levy, *Linguet*, pp. 330-333.

umphant Apocalypse and the Catastrophic Apocalypse''²⁶ our confrontation with the horrors of the modern world throws us back on the resources of earlier traditions. We will probably not want to emulate the hysteria of Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet's troubled prose. But his struggle to use language to jar his contemporaries out of their complacency about the world around them offers matter for serious reflection for any modern thinker who finds himself undertaking a similar mission.

²⁶ In *Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Humanity*, ed. Avner Cohen & Steven Lee (New York, 1986), pp. 131-150.

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